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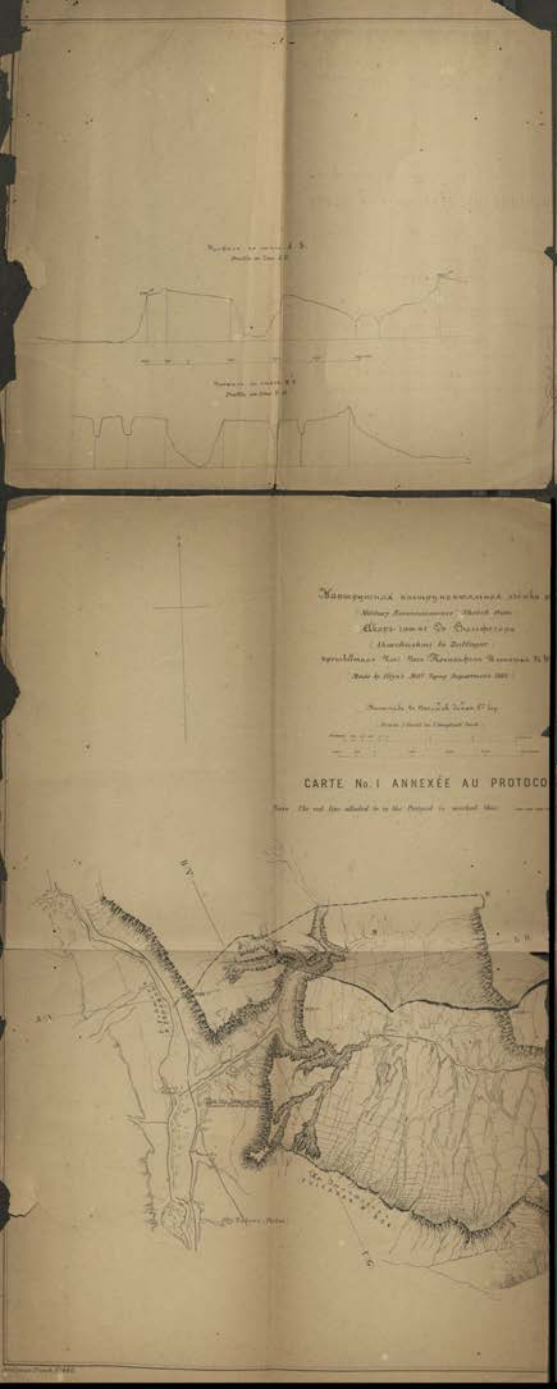
CARTE No. I ANNEXÉE AU PROTOCOLE



CARTE Nº II ANNEXEÉ AU PROTOCOLE.

MAP OF THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER OF AFGHANISTAN
FROM SURVEYS BY THE BRITISH BOUNDARY COMMISSION
The letters P.Q.R. and the underlinings are inserted in red in the map attached to the Protocol.
P A N J D E H
B A D G H I S
Hamdamas
HERAT
SCALE, 8 ENGLISH MILES TO 1 INCH.
SCALE OF VERSTS

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE respecting Central Asia.

(In continuation of "Central Asia No. 2: 1885.")

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. May 1885.

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.

LONDON:

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108678 a

Correspondence respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

No. 1.

Viscount Enfield to Lord Tenterden.—(Received February 7.)

My Lord, *India Office, February 7, 1881.*

I AM directed by the Marquis of Hartington to forward herewith, to be laid before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of correspondence between the Russian authorities in Turkestan and the late Ameer Shere Ali, of Cabul, and his Ministers, arranged in order of date.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ENFIELD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

*Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated March 28, 1870.**

(Literal retranslation into English of the translation into Persian made at Cabul of the letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali.)

YOU have probably heard that your nephew, Abdoor Rahman Khan, who, a few years ago, was Ruler of Balkh and other parts of Afghanistan, has now arrived in Tashkend, and I, as a Vakeel on the part of the Russian Emperor, have given him permission to come into Tashkend, and due honour has been done to him. In order that I may not have misinterpreted the Sirdar's staying here to Afghans, I, from my customary honesty and sincerity, and out of regard to relations, think it necessary to express that I desire that unity may exist between Russian Turkestan and you.

The countries in Asia which are in the possession of the Russian Emperor have no limits that are at present in your possession. These limits are separated by the river of Bokhara, the Ameer of which place is Syud Muzufur Khan, who has concluded a Treaty with me, and who has been passing his days happily under my protection. It is necessary that no quarrel and disagreement should take place between me and you. Although we are distant neighbours, it is proper that we pass our days in friendship and pleasure. I had a desire for a long time that I might be a "wastah" (mediator) in the Kingdom of Afghanistan, not only because you are under the protection of the British Government, with whom we are also, you are aware, on friendly relations, but also because we did not see any mischievous interference on your part in the affairs of Bokhara. Afghanistan and Bokhara ought not to be in terms of disagreement with each other. It is proper for each party to act in accordance with his own ways, and not to care for the welfare or for the misfortune of his neighbour.

These considerations require this, that when Abdoor Rahman Khan made a request to come into Tashkend, I answered that "our Emperor, from his greatness, shows kindness to all, especially to you, as you are now unfortunate, but you should not hope to receive through me any assistance to wage war." I don't want that I should take part in his quarrel with you, because your behaviour has not been the cause of any complaint. I also hope that our old friendship and unity should continue to exist as before. For this reason I send you this letter. I shall be very glad to receive from you such a reply as may be conformable to my wish and to established usage regarding the (?) of Bokhara, Khiva, and other Ilaquas.

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 182.

(Literal Translation of the Persian Triplicate sent by General von Kaufmann.*)

*Translation of a Letter from the Russian Governor-General in Turkestan to His Highness Ameer Ali Khan, Ameer of the whole territory of Afghanistan.**

You must have been informed that Abdoor Rahman Khan, son of the late Ameer Afzul Khan, who formerly ruled the country of Balkh and all its cities, has now come into the country of Tashkend. I am a Vakeel and Ruler of this place on the part of the wealthy and powerful White Padshah. I have shown respect and regard to the above-mentioned personage. Do not misconstrue the fact of this Sirdar of the Afghans being in this place. Therefore I inform you by letter. I have written what is true and correct, what relation Russian Turkestan has with Afghanistan, which is now subject to your rule, and the regard which I have for you. The Emperor who has no limits of his own in Turkestan between the two exalted States of Afghanistan and the Russian Kings, Bokhara and enough (*lit*). The Ameer of that place, Syud Muzufur Khan, has concluded a Treaty of Peace, has thereby become a friend, and also has come and remained under the protection of Ameer Atour Azum (Emperor). This act cannot in any way cause enmity and misunderstanding between us and you. As we are distant neighbours of yours, permanent peace and friendship will be established between us and you. It is not my wish to meddle with the affairs of the State of Afghanistan. As you are under the protection of the British Government, it is known to you that our Emperor is a friend of the British Government. For this reason you have not now meddled with the affairs of Bokhara. Let there be not anything in common between Afghanistan and Bokhara; let the masters of both the countries pass their days in peace and tranquillity, and be ignorant and without care for what happens in the neighbour's country. When Abdoor Rahman Khan applied for leave by letter to come into Tashkend, I granted it to him. As our Emperor naturally gives protection to those who are subjected to misfortunes and troubles, I, before the said Abdoor Rahman's arrival here, informed him by letter that he should not ask for aid and help to wage war with you.

I do not at all wish to discontinue friendship with you, because as yet your acts have caused no displeasure to me. I earnestly hope that you will bear the same relation with me in perpetuity. For this reason I have sent a letter to you. When you receive this, you will, after understanding the above said contents properly, and regarding them as right, send me such an answer as may be in accordance with my wish, so that I may thereby be satisfied, and be obliged to you as well as be pleased with you. May your life be prolonged. For your honour and for the comfort of those needy men who depend upon you this letter is written.

Tashkend, March 28, 1870.

(Transcript of the Duplicate sent in English by General von Kaufmann.*)

To the Ameer of Cabul, Shere Ali Khan.

You probably will have heard that your nephew, Abdoor Rahman Khan, who a few years ago was Regent of Balkh and of other parts of Afghanistan, is just arrived in Tashkend, and that I, as Representative of my gracious Emperor, have allowed him an honourable hospitality. In order that the staying here of the above-mentioned Afghanistan Sirdar might not be erroneously interpreted by you, I suppose it necessary to explain to you, with my customary sincerity and veracity, my point of view concerning the relations I should like to see established between Russian Turkestan and you.

The Asiatic possessions of His Majesty the Emperor have no common limits with the country now submitted to your supremacy; they are separated by the Khanate of Bokhara, whose Ruler, the Ameer Seid Mosafar, having concluded a Treaty of Peace with Russia, stays now in friendly relations to us, and is enjoying the mighty protection of our great Emperor. Between us both there must not be any misunderstandings and vexations at all, and, though distant neighbours, we ought to live in friendship and harmony. I am quite far of longing for meddling with the interior affairs of Afghanistan, not only because you are under the protection of the British Government, with which, as you know, the Russian Government is in the best and most friendly relations, but also because I did not see any infraction from your part in the internal affairs of Bokhara. Afghanistan and Bokhara ought not to have any point of contact together; both of them must go their separate ways without caring for the welfare of the neighbour.

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 182.

These considerations influenced me, when, having received from Abdoor Rahman Khan the request of being admitted to Tashkend, I answered him that His Majesty the Emperor of Russia graciously affords hospitality to everybody, so much the more to an unfortunate, but that he must not in the least reckon on my interference in his quarrel with you, and not expect any assistance from our part. I should not like to be in discordance with you, because your behaviour gave no matter for complaints. I hope also that our mutual relations will remain the same, and therefore I send you this letter, and should be glad to receive from you the assurance that, on your part, the analogous principles of neutrality will be strictly observed concerning the khanates of Bokhara, Khiva, and other neighbours.

Tashkend, March 28, 1870.

The Turkestan Governor-General and Commander of the Troops of the Turkestan Military Circle,

(Signed) VON KAUFMANN, *General, Aide-de-camp.*

Pour traduction conforme :
Le Conseiller d'Etat et Gentilhomme de la Chambre,
(Signé) C. STRUVE.

(Translation of Letter sent in Russian by General von Kaufmann.*)

A Son Altesse l'Émir,

Votre Altesse a probablement déjà entendu que votre neveu, le vénérable Abdool Rahman Khan, n'a jamais envahi Balkh et d'autres villes d'Afghan ; il est arrivé il y a quelque temps à Tachkend, et moi, ici comme le Représentant de mon puissant Maître, je l'ai reçu avec honneur et plaisir.

Je ne désire pas que la résidence d'un Afghan Serdar soit mal compris de vous. Je le trouve nécessaire de vous exposer immédiatement dans cette lettre, avec une loyauté accoutumée et franche, ma vue concernant le Turkestan Russe avec votre puissance dans l'Afghanistan et ces régulations que je dirige dans les relations avec vous.

Les dominions du Czar Blanc dans le Turkestan et les terres aujourd'hui subordonnées à vous n'ont pas de communes frontières ; les possessions du Khan de la Boukharie nous séparent ; l'Emir Saïd Mouzaphar, le Souverain qui a juré la paix avec la Russie, est en amitié et sous la protection du grand Empereur de Toutes les Russies. Pour cela il ne peut avoir aucune attaque ni malentendu entre nous, et nous, quoique des voisins éloignés, nous pouvons et devons vivre en amitié et en accord. Je n'ai pas l'intention de me mêler des affaires intérieures de l'Afghanistan, parce que vous êtes sous la protection du Gouvernement Anglais, lequel, comme vous savez probalement, est en amitié et en accord avec l'administration du Czar Blanc, et pour cela vous de votre part ne devez vous mêler des affaires de Boukharie. L'Afghanistan et la Boukharie ne doivent avoir rien de commun entre eux, et chacun de ces royaumes doit vivre de sa propre vie.

Une pareille signification j'ai donné à Abdool Rahman Khan, quand celui-ci s'adressa à moi avec la supplication de le recevoir à Tachkend, parce que le grand Souverain ne refuse à personne l'hospitalité, surtout quand un homme est malheureux ; et pour cela je l'ai accueilli aimablement, mais il ne compte nullement sur mon intervention dans sa querelle avec vous, et il n'en suit aucune assistance de notre côté. Je ne désire pas de me diverger de vous, parce que votre efficacité n'a donné aucun sujet de mécontentement.

Dans l'entière espérance que nos relations resteront ainsi dans le futur je vous écris cette lettre, et je serais très content si je reçois de vous l'assurance écrite que vous avez l'intention de vous tenir à mon programme.

Que le Dieu Suprême prolonge vos jours pour votre gloire et pour le bien-être du peuple.

Ville Tachkend, le 28 *Mars,* 1870.

Le Gouverneur-Général de Turkestan et le Commandant Militaire du District de l'Armée,

(Signé) KAUFMANN, *le Général, Aide-de-camp.*

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 182.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated July 15, 1870.

(After compliments.)

BE it known to you that your two friendly letters on the same subject in the Russian, English, and Persian languages, dated Tashkend, the 28th March, 1870, corresponding to the 24th Zil Hijj 1286 H., reached me, the first through the officials of the King of Bokhara, and the second through the servants of the Mir of Samarkand, on Monday, the 14th Safar (16th May), and on Thursday, the 17th idem (19th May) respectively, and opened the doors of happiness and joy on the face of my hopes. I was extremely gratified at your promise that no officer of the Emperor of Russia will encroach overtly or covertly on the Afghan territory, nor will any arms or help be given to the enemies of Afghanistan. I have also, in consultation with the British Government, issued orders to my frontier officers to guard the border in every way, respect my authority, and abstain from interfering in the affairs of the territory and tribes that are outside the boundaries appertaining to, or under the protection of, Afghanistan. Also, my intention and object is that we should remain firm in the arrangement mentioned above, not only because that the Viceroy of India (between whose Sovereign and the Emperor of Russia great friendship exists) suggested the same (arrangements), but because I feel certain that it will conduce to the welfare of my country and to the comfort of my people. I trust you will always consider me desirous to hear the glad tidings of your good health.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated December 20, 1870.*

I HAVE read with attention the friendly letter which I received from you at Tashkend on the 29th August of the present year. I have observed with pleasure that the contents of this letter, and the adoption of the resolution to which you have come with regard to your relations towards your neighbours, answer my expectation and naturally merit the approbation of my august master. Believe me, you will never have reason to regret your frank and kindly action towards the Russian Power, and with the protector of its territorial neighbours. I hope that time and circumstances will fortify the friendship between us.

It has long been shown by perpetual experiments that each discord, each act of hostility, never fails to lead nations into misery alone, while, on the contrary, peace and amicable relations between Sovereigns will advance their nations into a most flourishing condition.

For this reason my great master, who is always occupied with the prosperity of his subjects, desires (his servants) to live in peace and in harmony with the neighbouring people, not meddle in their internal affairs, and justly looks for the same frankness and friendly conduct on the part of the reigning Princes of other States.

I offer my prayers to God for your health, for your renown, and that He may cause you to guide your people with wisdom.

Inclosure 4 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated July 17, 1871.†

YOUR friendly letter, dated Tashkend, the 20th December, giving assurances of friendship between the Governments of Russia and Afghanistan, has reached me, and has served to afford me fresh joy and great pleasure. By it I have been more fully assured than before than the officers of the Russian Government cherish no other wish in their heart than to maintain peace and harmony with the neighbours, and not to meddle with their internal affairs, and further, that they will continue for ever to pursue such

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 190.

† Ibid., p. 193.

course. As to my part, I will act in the same way as I have communicated in the reply which I sent to your letter on Thursday, the 15th Rubee-oos-sanee, 1287 Hijree (15th July, 1870). In respect to the future, it is also my wish that there should occur nothing to weaken the ties of friendship subsisting between the two Governments, as on such friendship depend the peace and tranquillity of the people.

I hope that you will continue to consider me as ever anxious to hear of your welfare.

Inclosure 5 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated October 28, 1871.*

AFTER presenting your Highness my friendly salutations, and expressing my good wishes, I beg to state that, while I was engaged in making arrangements for the countries which have been placed in my charge by our Great Emperor, your welcome letter, dated 28th Rubee-oos-Sanee, 1288 Hijree (17th July, 1871), reached Tashkend, whence it was sent to me at Kuldja without delay. I was at the time engaged in settling the affairs of Kuldja, the irregular proceedings of Abool Ala, Sultan of that country, having rendered it necessary for me again to assemble an army and capture his country. From the contents of your letter I have been gratified to learn that it is your wish to maintain friendship with Russia, as well as with other countries under its protection. If your officers would carry out strictly the orders issued by you not to interfere with the neighbouring country of Bokhara, our friendship would daily increase to the great benefit of the neighbouring people.

Such a state of things is entirely in accordance with the well-intentioned views expressed by our Great Emperor, and would also be in harmony with the good understanding that exists between Russia and the English Government. The Ameer of Bokhara, a firm friend and ally of Russia, has sent intelligence that Mirza Mahomed Tahir has been deputed to that place (Bokhara) as an Envoy from Cabul. Among other tidings brought by the said Envoy is the intelligence that dissensions that had hitherto existed among the Afghans have been brought to an end. It has also been ascertained from the Envoy that your eldest son, Mahomed Yakoob Khan, has sought a reconciliation with you. If this is actually the case I congratulate you on the happy termination of this miserable business. My sympathies have been with you throughout the affair, since the right was on your side; for God favours not a son who rebels against his father, nor do men wish success to such a one.

Inclosure 6 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated May 19, 1872.†

(After compliments.)

YOUR friendly letter, dated the 28th October, 1871, which was a reply to mine of the 28th Rubbee-oos-sanee, 1288 A.H. (17th July, 1871), has duly reached me, and afforded me much gratification. It has given me great pleasure to hear of the victories of the Russian arms at Kuldja, intelligence of which was communicated in your friendly letter.

Your congratulations regarding the reconciliation of Mahomed Yakoob afford a proof of the friendly feeling that exists between the two Governments.

As regards the preservation of the Bokhara boundary, please God there will be no deviation from the arrangements mentioned in the friendly letter, dated the 15th Rubbee-oos-sanee, 1287 A.H. (15th July, 1870). The situation there is still the same.

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 192.

† Ibid., p. 195.

Inclosure 7 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated February 1872.*

(After compliments.)

INFORMATION has lately been received from St. Petersburgh to the effect that your nephew, Sekunder Khan, who, as you know, has been for four years in the service of our Emperor, has now quitted the Imperial service, and has left for his native country, travelling through England and Hindustan. After paying his respects to you, his Sovereign, he hopes to be reinstated in his former position, and to be put in possession of his ancestral possessions; also to have the honour of entering your Highness' service. I make this friendly representation of your nephew's intentions, and trust your Highness will receive him according to his deserts, and regard him with your Royal favour. For three years he has resided at our capital, and rendered honourable service to our Emperor. He will, therefore, doubtless serve your Highness with the same devotion.

Actuated by feelings of friendship, I informed your Highness by letter, four months ago, of the capture by the Russian army of the town and dependencies of Kuldja, but have as yet received no reply. I fear, therefore, that from some cause or other my letter may not have reached you.

Trusting you will favour me with accounts of your welfare, I commend you to the protection of God.

The Russian original of this is in my handwriting.

Inclosure 8 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated July 20, 1872.†

(After titles, compliments, &c.)

YOUR kind despatch of "Febral" 1872, every letter and word of which expressed tokens or desire for increasing and confirming the sincere friendship existing between us, reached me in a happy and gratifying time on 3rd "Rabi-ool-Sanee" (corresponding to the 10th June, 1872), and tended to the confirmation of the ties of our mutual friendship and unity. I mastered the contents of the few lines of your letter, inviting me to send a reply to your friendly communication of the 28th October, 1871, and giving some information regarding Sirdar Sekunder Khan, and have to state that the reply to your "murasila" in question was forwarded to you some days before the receipt of your despatch of Febral 1872, *i.e.*, on the 10th Rabee-ool-Awul (corresponding to the 19th May, 1872); I conclude that you must have received it ere this. I hope that you will always consider me desirous of the firmness of friendly relations and cordiality.

Inclosure 9 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated June 28, 1872.‡

AFTER wishing the friendship and welfare of your Highness.

Your letter dated the 10th of Rubee-ul-Awul, 1289 (corresponding to the 7th May, 1872, Russian year), having been received, I have been happy to become acquainted with your good health. I have derived boundless delight from the receipt of your letter. The advantages of the interchange of letters are first, that the circumstance argues existence of mutual good feeling; next, it becomes the cause of strengthening reciprocal friendship, and the respective subjects of both parties becoming comfortable, it indicates the preservation of reciprocal engagements up to date.

Your Highness has mentioned the lands forming the boundary between yourself and Bokhara. This matter was placed and confirmed on its former footing on receipt of your former letter. God willing, it is hoped that no change will take place in this. I trust

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 194.

† Ibid., p. 196.

‡ Ibid., p. 198.

that the old status will be maintained in perpetuity, for the slightest changes causing displeasure to both parties destroys manifestly the comforts of both.

And let it not be concealed that before the receipt of your reply to my letter, about four months ago, Pod Folkonik Sekunder Khan, your "jen," came from St. Petersburgh really with the intention of going to see you. I gave a letter to him, and have sent it by the hand of Mahamud Jan, a servant of his, to you. It is hoped that he has delivered it.

Regarding you as my friend and neighbour, I inform you that the people in the territories entrusted to my charge by the great Imperator, my Sovereign, are all comfortable. At the present time perfect friendship and amity exists between ourselves and all our neighbours. From the bottom of my heart, and in perfect sincerity, I desire that God may preserve you also in comfort, and I sincerely believe you also to be my friend.

Your wisdom and sagacity will doubtless have taught you by the study of history, that the Great God wishes the King to rule who, preserving his subjects in comfort, maintains friendship with his neighbours.

May God preserve you in health and safety, during years innumerable, and believe me that I am anxious to see friendship maintained between us.

The original letter was signed at Tashkend on the 16th June, 1872 (Russian year), and 23rd of Rubius-Sani, 1829, of the Mahommedan era, by the Gubernator of Turkestan, General-Adjutant von Kaufmann, and the signature is witnessed by me—Islateki Savepuk General Istrode.

Inclosure 10 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated August 12, 1872.*

BEFORE my leaving the country of Tashkend, your Highness' welcome and friendly letter, dated 13th Jumadi-ool-awul, 1289 H. (20th July, 1872), reached me, and the receipt of this, your exalted communication, gave me great satisfaction. I am now ready to start for St. Petersburgh for the purpose of communicating to my Imperial master the state of affairs of the countries which His Imperial Majesty has entrusted to me, and also the circumstances connected with those territories of the Khans which are situated in the neighbourhood of our possessions. I do not wish that the bearer of your letter should go away without a letter in answer to yours. Whatever I wrote to say in my former letter I repeat in my present communication, that I cherish no other wish in my heart than that for the tranquillity and repose of my neighbours, inasmuch as such desire accords with the disposition of my Emperor. I am more satisfied because your Highness agrees to follow the same course. I consider it my pleasant duty to bring this commendable intention of your Highness to my Imperial master.

I hope that your Highness will never afterwards allow any change to take place in this laudable course. May God grant you health and happiness! It is my constant prayer to the Almighty that all His creatures may live in peace and tranquillity.

Inclosure 11 in No. 1.

Letter to Governor of Balkh, dated August 14, 1872.

AFTER expressions of friendship I beg to state that Ahmed Naib, whom you deputed, having left Balkh, arrived in the country of Tashkend on the 15th,† and delivered to the Governor-General and the chief officer of Turkestan the letter from Ameer Shere Ali Khan, intimating his intention to maintain friendly relations with all. The Governor-General having been gratified with the receipt of the above letter, wrote, agreeably to the requirements of time, a hasty reply, made it over to the said Ahmed Naib, and sent him to you to Balkh. The Governor-General hopes that, on the arrival of the letter, you will forward it to the Ameer of Cabul. It is now three days since the Governor-General has started from this place for St. Petersburgh, for the purpose of paying a visit to the Great Emperor. He has commanded me to communicate to you his prayer that the grace of God may be with you, and to request that you will, without loss of time, forward the above letter to the Ameer. Further, it is the wish of the Governor-General that the friendly

* Already laid in "Central Asia No, 1 (1878)," p. 201.

† ? July.

relations subsisting between the Russians and the Afghans should become more firm and consolidated daily, but the maintenance of such friendly relations depends on the peace and tranquillity of the neighbouring countries. Mahomed Ali Khan, you are a respectable servant of the Ameer, and you are carrying out his intention. May you, please God, continue to follow this laudable course.

It is my prayer to the Almighty that you may continue to enjoy health and happiness.

Inclosure 12 in No. 1.

*Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated November 16, 1873.**

I RECEIVED your kind and friendly letter, dated the 12th August 1872, on 22nd idem, and was extremely gratified with its contents. The cause of the delay of a few months in the dispatch of a reply to it is evident, viz., first, you went to St. Petersburgh, and afterwards you were occupied in the Kharism expedition. I hope you have now returned in health and comfort to Tashkend, and I have, therefore, considered it advisable to take the opportunity of sending a reply to your murasila. I am much gratified with the contents of your letter, explaining that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia is anxious for the peace and welfare of neighbouring States, and that you have considered it one of your most pleasing duties to report to His Majesty that you have had every reason to be satisfied with me, and that I have upheld the friendship existing between us. It is as evident as daylight that at present His Majesty is a great and powerful monarch, and it is, therefore, becoming that neighbouring States should enjoy tranquillity and convenience. This policy will tend to confirm the friendship existing between His Majesty and these States. I have expressed my gratification in my murasila dated the 15th "Rabius-sani," 1287 (15th July, 1870), written in reply to your murasila of the 28th March, 1870 (24th Zilhej, 1286), containing your promise that no Russian officer will interfere with the affairs of Afghanistan, and that no assistance or advice will be given to the enemies of that kingdom which may be turned against it. I still entertain the hope that by the grace of God the friendship existing between us will not be disturbed, and that the neighbouring States will be allowed to enjoy peace.

My attention will always be devoted to this point.

I hope you will continue to inform me of your health, &c.

Inclosure 13 in No. 1.

Letter from General Kolpakovski to Shere Ali, dated December 6, 1873.†

AFTER expressions of the best wishes, the contents of the letter are as follows:—

Your Eminence's letter of the 25th day of Ramazan, of the year 1290 (16th November, 1873), and addressed to the Governor-General, General Aide-de-camp von Kaufmann, has been duly and opportunely (in a good hour) received by me.

On his return from the glorious Khivan campaign the High Governor-General left for St. Petersburgh, in order to report to His Majesty the Emperor on the condition of affairs in this province.

Being charged with the government of Turkestan during the absence of his Excellency, I consider it my duty to express to you my satisfaction as regards the feelings of friendship and devotion which you set forth in your letter.

In dispatching the same to the High Governor-General for his favourable consideration, I entertain the hope that he will not refuse your request, and that he will represent to His Majesty the Emperor your conscientious mode of action, and your endeavour to become worthy of the grace of my august Master.

I fully share your opinion that peace and tranquillity serve to develop the welfare of a State, and to render durable friendly relations existing between two Powers.

Continue to follow the same straight road along which you have hitherto gone, and

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 8. † Ibid., p. 16.

you will become convinced that it is the right and advantageous road as regards both yourself and the welfare of your people.

I wish you health, welfare, and good fortune in all your undertakings.

Inclosure 14 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated December 1, 1873.*

ACCOMPANIED by troops I left Tashkend for Khiva. Your Highness may have heard that the Khan of Khiva had commenced committing unjustifiable and unlawful acts, whereupon His Majesty the Emperor of Russia directed me to go to Khiva with a view to compel him by force of arms to act according to law. This undertaking was attended with full success. Having obtained a victory over the army of Khiva, I conquered the country. Afterwards the Khan of Khiva and his dependents surrendered themselves to the favour of His Majesty the Emperor. At present peace has been established in the country. It is not the wish of His Imperial Majesty to add territories to his extensive Empire. For this reason, by order of His Majesty, the country of Khiva has been allowed to remain as an independent territory as before, and I have placed Syud Mahomed Ruheem Khan on his own guddee and in possession of his ancestral dominions. Now the said Khan has agreed to fulfil certain conditions, and has also engaged to observe certain conditions for the preservation of peace and tranquillity in the country, and for the maintenance of friendship with the neighbours. After the restoration of his territory, His Majesty the Emperor ordered the Khan to set at liberty all the slaves. The Khan then issued a Proclamation prohibiting a slave trade, as this act was against law. The order of the Khan on the subject is now being carried out. Among the slaves released there are 400 Afghans who were collected in this territory. They want to go back to their country, some through Bokhara, some through Balkh, and some through Maimena. As your Highness is our friend, I consider it proper to bring this event to your notice. With a view to the promotion of the welfare of your Highness' subjects, may the Almighty God prolong your life.

Inclosure 15 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated January 25, 1874.

(After compliments.)

I BEG to inform you that your friendly letter, containing an account of the conquest of Khiva, reached me on the 10th Shawal, 1290 H. (1st December, 1873).†

I have mastered its contents from the beginning to the end. As it contained the news of your good health, it opened the doors of happiness and joy on the face of my hopes. I have been fully informed of what you wrote in your letter, namely, that 400 of my subjects, who have been released (from the Turkomans) will be passing through Balkh and Maimena. I hope you will always consider me desirous to hear of your welfare.

Inclosure 16 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated January 25, 1874.

(After compliments.)

THE event that has recently occurred here is that, in conformity with the approved custom of the kings of antiquity, and with a view to promote the welfare of the subjects of the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, I nominated, with the unanimous consent of the Chiefs of Afghanistan, my beloved son, Sirdar Abdulla Jan, as my heir-apparent, on the first day of the Ramazan festival, viz., Saturday, the 1st Shawal,

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 10.

† NOTE.—This date cannot be correct, as the letter was *written* on the 1st December, 1873.

1290 H. (23rd November, 1873), so that after my death he should bear the heavy burthen of the Empire, and assume charge both of the country and the army. The whole Mussulman population of Afghanistan and all the followers of the best of mankind (Prophet) opened their lips to invoke blessings on my above-named son, and agreed to tender their allegiance to him, and acknowledge him as their sole ruler and the Wali (King) of all Afghanistan. Whereas friendly relations subsist between this God-granted Government and the illustrious Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, I have written this to inform you of this happy event. I trust you will always consider me desirous to hear of your welfare.

Inclosure 17 in No. 1.

Letter from General Kolpakovski to Shere Ali, dated February 25, 1874.*

THE murasilas forwarded by your Highness on the 6th Zilhij, 1290 (25th January, 1874), to the address of the Gubernator von Kaufmann reached me, but, as he is still at St. Petersburgh, I will forward them to him without delay. As for the present his duties are entrusted to me by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, I have the honour to send replies to these communications. In your murasila of 6th Zilhij you sent information that you had nominated your son, Sirdar Abdulla Jan, as your heir-apparent; I congratulate you on this selection. Such nominations tend to the comfort and tranquillity of the kingdom. I wish perpetual possession of your kingdom by you and your heirs, and hope that after your death Sirdar Abdulla Jan will follow your example and make himself an ally and a friend of the Emperor. Your Highness is aware of the friendly relations which hitherto existed between the English and Russian Governments, but lately these relations have been confirmed by an alliance between the Rulers of these two kingdoms.

The daughter of the Emperor has been married to the second son of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen Victoria. I send this happy information to your Highness on account of the friendship existing between your Highness and the Russian Government, and hope that you will consider this relationship advantageous to our friendship with the English Government, who are favourably disposed to you. May God be your protector under all circumstances and keep you happy.

Inclosure 18 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated July 12, 1875.†

(After titles, compliments, &c.)

BY order of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, I stopped for about one half year at St. Petersburgh to settle some matters of this country (viz., Russian Turkestan). Now by command of him (the Emperor) I have returned to Tashkend, and consider it advisable (*lit.* a friendly trouble) to inform your Highness of my arrival. During my sojourn at St. Petersburgh I was gratified with the receipt of two friendly communications from you. In one of these murasilas you mentioned the appointment of one of your sons, Sirdar Abdulla Jan, as your heir-apparent. I hope that the [A] chain of friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan will in future increase and become firm, owing to the recent alliance between the Emperor of Russia and the Queen of England. This (alliance) has tended to the fulfilment of the best wishes of the two families, and I doubt not that this alliance of the two Powers will be an omen (*lit.* a mark or sign) for those countries (the people of) which under the protection of the Emperor of Russia and the Queen of England live in great peace and comfort. [B] May God save you for the sake of your dignity and the comfort of (your) people! And may you live long and enjoy happiness!

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 15.

† Ibid., p. 65.

Inclosure 19 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated September 19, 1875.*

I RECEIVED your friendly letter of 8th Jamadi-ul-Sani (12th July, 1875), in reply to my two murasilas by hand of your Envoy Aishan Khwaja Bazurg, and was highly gratified with its contents, from which it appeared that you had returned from St. Petersburgh to Tashkend, and in which you gave happy news of the confirmation of the friendship existing between Afghanistan and Russia. By the grace of God, nothing contrary to the said friendship shall take place on my part, and the dispatch of friendly communications should be considered one of the principles of our friendship. I am gratified with the news contained in the last paragraph of your letter regarding the confirmation of the alliance of the (two) Great Powers (viz., Russia and England), as this alliance will increase the comfort and security of the creatures of God ("Khalk-ula"). Continue to afford me happiness by giving information as to your health, &c.

Inclosure 20 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated October 29 (10*th November*), 1875.†

YOUR friendly murasila of the 19th September, 1875, reached me at Khojend. You must have heard that three months before its arrival I had been deputed by the Emperor with troops to quell the disturbances raised in Khokand. These disturbances took place on the 1st Rajab (3rd August, 1875), and Khudayar Khan, the Ruler, having fled (from Khokand) took refuge in Russian Turkestan. I was obliged to proceed against Khokand with troops. I defeated Kipchak, Kirghiz, and Khokand rebels near the Fort of Makhram, and took possession of the Khokand city (where no fighting took place), and appointed the eldest son of Khudayar Khan, viz., Nasrudin Beg, to the Chiefship. His Chiefship was previously accepted by Moollas and other people, but they subsequently forced him to become an enemy of the Russian Government. Having entered into negotiations with him, I returned to Namangan, viâ the right bank of the Sir, and to avoid future difficulties, posted some troops there. After a few days, I was informed that disturbances had again been raised in Khokand, and that the young Chief had taken flight to our territory. Now I have posted troops at Namangan and other frontier cities of Khokand, and have quelled the disturbances and afforded comfort to the people.

Through real friendship I have given you an account of the Khokand expedition. I hope that the chain of friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan will daily increase and remain always firm. I desire your health and safety. May your success increase in all your affairs and actions.

Inclosure 21 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated February 3, 1876.‡

YOUR friendly letter of the 27th October (10th November), 1875, corresponding with the 11th Shawal, 1292 Hijree, giving an account of subjugation of Khokand, reached me in good time on the 28th Zul Hij, 1292 Hijree (26th January, 1876), and I have noted its contents, which tend to promote friendship. The narrative given by you of the mustering of Kipchak and Kirghiz tribes and Khokandis, of the appointment of Nasiruddin, son of Khudayar Khan (Chief) of Khokand, of his falling into difficulties and taking refuge under the mighty power of Russia, and of your deputing an army towards Namangan and the frontier of Khokand, and thereby restoring peace among the Russian subjects, &c., has impressed my heart. I strongly hope that, if God pleases, nothing will interfere with the progress of friendship between Russia and Afghanistan.

The favour of your continuing to write to me about your good health is requested.

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 67.

† Ibid., p. 71.

‡ Ibid., p. 73.

Inclosure 22 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated — February, 1878.*

YOUR Highness may have heard that some time ago (*lit.* in these days) some evil-disposed persons persuaded (*lit.* commanded) the people of Khokand with a view to gaining their (own) object, and considered it advantageous to endeavour to promote the same object, and that consequently in the territory of Khokand several sad and dangerous (mohlik) occurrences took place.

My Lord (*lit.* Oh exalted Dignity!), I have considered it useless to give a full detailed account of these (occurrences) in this despatch, but it is most important to communicate them (to you), otherwise it would be contrary to the friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan (*lit.* also the contents of this letter would have been somewhat repugnant). Consequently, I have deemed it incumbent on me to give in this murasila, in continuation of previous murasilas, a brief account of the occurrences in Khokand and of the manner in which they terminated.

Last year, in the month of "Ayeeul," corresponding with Jamadiul Sani,† the people of Kipchak and Kirghiz tribes instigated and persuaded the people of Khokand to revolt, and their Sirdars (Headmen), Isa Aulia, Abdul Rahman Aftabchi, and other conceited persons, adopted measures against their (Khokandis) lawful Khan and expelled him from his country towards our dominions to seek shelter. At that time our agents, armed with good offices, had gone to the people of Khokand, and the Khan took refuge and came with them (the agents) to our territory.

As soon as Khuda Yar Khan reached here, an agent of the head of the rebels arrived at Taskhend from Khokand with all speed with a letter to the Governor-General (meaning General von Kaufmann), stating that all the people (in Khokand) had rebelled against Khuda Yar Khan in consequence of his oppression and deviation from the (Mahommedan) law, and had driven him from their country, and that they had desired Nasiruddin Khan, the legitimate heir to the Chiefship, to become their Khan. . . . . General von Kaufmann most kindly accorded his consent (to their proposal), and sent a letter to the new Khan, Nasiruddin Khan, to effect that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia was prepared to agree to his Khanship; but his agreement depended on the fulfilment of certain engagements of the people of Khokand, though it was understood that those engagements did not differ from the (contents of the) Treaty with Khuda Yar Khan.

The Russian Government felt anxiety as to whether the Sirdars of the rebels would accept (*i.e.*, obey) the new Ruler (Nasiruddin) and would exercise no oppression over the people, show ability and excellence in administration, and make endeavours towards peace and comfort, and after acknowledging the authority of their great neighbours, the Russians, abstain (*lit.* forget) from seeking their own interest and gains, *i.e.*, from deposing the Khan accepted by the Russians, and would thus gain the good-will of Von Kaufmann. The next occurrence proved that the deputation of the above agent to Tashkend was only a stratagem and to gain time; they disregarded the kindness of General von Kaufmann, and their coming as Representatives into the Russian possessions was a mere stratagem. When their agents were at Tashkend, they gave trouble to the people of Khokand in coming to our dominions, so much so, that they told them that the Russians exercise great oppression over the Mahommedans. Having become enemies of the Russians they endeavour to kindle fire (of insurrection) in our subjects of (?) therefore they sent invitations and letters to the Mahommedans of Khojend, Tashkend, and other border territories to join in disturbances. Before their agents had left our territory (*lit.* whether they had left or not), crowds of people of Khokand and Khojend, Karma, and Arp-tazan collected in Khojend Naloo and "Kari-ablik." We repulsed these people at once; still they succeeded in killing in a most brutal manner some of the residents of Alsatna, *i.e.*, Rahats and two Karkhanas and some cartmen, and in taking prisoner some travellers and Russians.

The Russian authorities lost no time (*lit.* were not negligent) in defence; the Governor-General collected troops at once in Killa Mahram and repulsed the Khokand rebels, and this victory was so successful that it became impossible for them to regather. Nasiruddin Khan acknowledged that it was vain and puerile on his part to oppose the Russians, and having expressed repentance declared himself an ally (*lit.* his submission) of the Governor-General, and in company with the rebels hastened to meet him, and solicited him to restore his Khanship to him permanently. He (the Governor-General) considered the offence of the Khan and the people of Khokand somewhat light, and thought that the people of Khokand were innocent and the Sirdars evil wishers; then the people of

* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 77. † July.

Khokand and the Sirdars came and were made to think over and understand their interests (*lit.* discriminate between gain and loss). Then the Governor-General of Turkestan, *i.e.*, Von Kaufmann, made over management of the territories of the Khan to him (the Khan), and reinstated him in the Chiefship permanently, and forgave the faults of the Sirdars and rebels. . . . . As punishment to the Khan and his officers, the territory of Namangan lying between the right bank of the River Sir and the point where the River Narin falls into the River Sir, was annexed to Russian possessions. As soon as, according to our new Treaty with Nasiruddin Khan, our troops vacated Khokand, disturbances took place in Khokand, at the instigation of Abdul Rahman Aftabchi. Like his father, Khuda Yar, Nasiruddin fled from Khokand, and was obliged to seek refuge under us; then the people of Khokand made Faulad Khan, a man of low family (*lit.* of unknown birth), their Khan; but he could not govern them, owing to his being destitute of common sense, sound judgment, and ability, and talent. He, in the commencement of his rule, caused brutal executions in Khokand, and killed a large number of good men, as well as all the survivors of Khuda Yar Khan, such as his sons, grandsons, &c. He attempted to try his fortune in opposing us, and to recover Namangan, and even to drive us out from Tashkend. For this purpose, with the aid and at the instigation of Abdul Rahman Aftabchi, he collected a great number of people in Andejan to attack Namangan. The Governor-General sent General Tor Daski (?) from Namangan, and he got possession of Andejan, and Faulad Khan and Abdul Rahman took to flight. The General Tor Daski considered the punishment sufficient, and by order of the Governor he abstained from ordering a general slaughter in Andejan, and returned to Namangan; had Faulad Khan, Abdul Rahman, and their advisers and councillors been sensible and experienced persons, the above punishment would have been sufficient for them, and instead of adopting lengthy operations and risking their lives, they would have tendered apology and allegiance, but as they did not possess such sense they again raised disturbances in Namangan. As God has given us strength, and as He helps all true and just undertakings, General Skobeleff, after quelling the disturbances raised in Namangan and punishing his subjects, suitably attacked Faulad Khan and Abdul Rahman Aftabchi several times, demolished several large buildings (perhaps forts or entrenchments are meant) and took possession of Andejan; then severe fighting took place in Aska, and Faulad Beg was forced to fly towards Karatagin. Abdul Rahman recovered his senses (*lit.* his eyes were opened) and confessed that it was most difficult and impossible (for him) to succeed in his hostilities with the Russians, and tendered voluntary submission and begged pardon. He was followed by the head Sirdar of Khokand rebels, who came into Major-General Skobeleff and repented his actions, and begged for forgiveness. After more than six months the people of Khokand, who were in a very distressed condition, felt inclined to make Nasiruddin Khan their Khan. He was at the time in Killa Mahram, and, finding his people in straits, he left for Khokand; before he had arrived at that place the Kipchaks and Kirghiz collected a large body of people and severely opposed him (several of his followers were taken prisoners), and those who escaped returned to Killa Mahram. Dissension exists amongst the people of Khokand, and in consequence of this ill-feeling some desired to appoint Nasiruddin, some Faulad Khan, and others some dissolute person (or worthless fellow), Aubash, as their Khan. The majority of the people, however, expressed their wish for assistance from the Russians; with this view the people of Khokand, Marghinan, Osh, and Isfara, and the agents of other provinces, waited on Major-General Skobeleff, and intimated their repentance at the enmity towards the Russians, and their inability to oppose them (the Russians), and expressed their wish for an amicable settlement of matters. They acknowledged their weakness, and begged for peace for their countrymen. They also made confessions of allegiance and submission, and brought letters from their countrymen to effect, " We have submitted ourselves to the Emperor, their submission may be accepted."

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This petition was accepted. The Emperor could adopt no other mode to restore peace and comfort to the people (of Khokand), because Nasiruddin was twice appointed Khan of his hereditary country, but he was expelled on both occasions towards Russian Turkestan (by his people). His Imperial Majesty considered it safer to keep these people under his own control with regard to their circumstances, and he therefore, on this (last) occasion approved of their submission. Their territory (*lit.* lands) was annexed to Russian possessions, the provinces included in the Khanship of Khokand were denominated Ublus Farghana. I intimate these events and the policy of the Emperor to your Highness, and also state that the Emperor ordered me to take possession of (*lit.* make submit) all the territories under the (late) Khan of Khokand. On receipt of this order I left with all speed next day, and reached the Ublus of Farghana; then I made over (the management of) Ublus-nai on the Sir (Darya) to Governor-General of Turkestan and Lieutenant-General

Golovachef. I beg to add, as a supplement to this letter, that the Russian Government is bound (*lit.* entrusted) to deal with friendship and peace in all affairs with their neighbours who govern and rule countries in the East independently (*lit.* permanently), and for this reason Russia abstains (*lit.* silent) from taking possession of them (countries), though on the present occasion we have been constrained to annex Khokand to Russian possessions; in reality this annexation has not been effected for the interests of Russia, but at the request of the people of Khokand, merely to afford them tranquillity. As on account of these evil habits and intentions old-standing dissension existed amongst these people, as appears from the history of their country, and they could never attain to tranquillity under a native Government, or till they accepted a powerful Ruler and Government, such a Ruler as the Emperor of Russia. I indulge in the hope that my unchanging friendship and regard may be accepted by your Highness.

Written at Tashkend, in the month of Moharram 1293 Hijr (1876), month of Febral (February). Written in Russian by General Gubernator, Turkestan, Adjutant von Kaufmann, Lieutenant-General Kolpakovski (?).

Inclosure 23 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated August 27, 1876.*

YOUR murasila, dated Mohurram (February), anent Khokand matters, which you sent from Tashkend by hand of Mirza Abdul Karim Khan, reached me at Cabul in Jamadi-ul-awal (June), and I have mastered its contents. If those persons who are in the neighbourhood or propinquity of great and powerful States, and for whom it is easy and feasible to undertake certain affairs in their country or city according to their capabilities and the customs and usages of that country or city, maintain (friendly) relations with (those) States, undoubtedly it is not politic or advisable that they should deviate from such relations. But as the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor is great and powerful, and as it is customary for its neighbours and the people in its adjacent territories to expect kindness and rectitude from it, if such great and noted Government shows kindness and mercy to the people in its neighbouring or adjoining territories, certainly it will tend to the encouragement (*lit.* hopes) of neighbours, and the comfort of the people of God. Continue to afford me happiness by informing me of your health, &c.

Inclosure 24 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated October 1, 1876.

I RECEIVED your murasila of 7th Shaban (27th August, 1876) in a happy time, and was highly gratified with its contents, and with your kindness and affection. Your observations in your murasila that "if those persons who are in the neighbourhood or propinquity of great and powerful States, and for whom it is easy and feasible to undertake certain affairs in their country or city according to their capabilities and the customs and usages of that country or city, maintain (friendly) relations with (those) States," show that your Highness fully knows and understands the rules of friendship existing between the Governments alluded to (by you). This friendship should not, however, be advantageous to one Power alone, or one tribe or one party alone, but to (several) States, or (in fact) to the people of the whole world. Should neighbouring States act on this principle or rule, no ill-feeling will ever spring up between them. The confidence which we have reposed in one another will, I hope, make the friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan firm. Under all circumstances, I pray that God may protect you and keep you safe and healthy.

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)," p. 88.

Inclosure 25 in No. 1.

*Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated July 6, 1876.**

TO discuss about some important Turkestan matters I was summoned by the Emperor, and after remaining about six months at St. Petersburgh, returned to Tashkend. I have considered it advisable to send this information to you. The friendship existing between you and the Russian Government and between you and me has been promoted. I pray God for your (long) life. Your rectitude will tend to the comfort and happiness of the subjects (of the Government of Russia and Afghanistan).

Inclosure 26 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated November 23, 1876.

(After compliments.)

YOUR Turki murasila, dated the 13th Jamadi-ul-Sani 1293 H. (the 6th July, 1876), sent from Tashkend by hand of Mirza Muhammud Yusuf Khan, reached me on the 7th Shaban 1293 H. (27th August, 1876). It gave assurances of the firm and everlasting friendship between Russia and Afghanistan, and afforded me great happiness and pleasure. I have been gratified to learn that you have comfortably returned to Tashkend from St. Petersburgh from the Emperor. God willing, no efforts will be spared by me in the consolidation and prolongation of the friendship existing between us, and I hope that our friendly relations will continue to remain on a perfect and most solid footing. Continue to gratify me by informing me of your health.

Inclosure 27 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated October 18, 1877.

(After compliments.)

YOUR friendly letter, dated the 17th September (1st October), corresponding to 12th Ramazan 1293 H., which you sent by the hands of Mulla Saifullah, reached me on Wednesday, the 5th Zil-kada 1293 H. (22nd November, 1876). I was greatly gratified to hear the glad tidings of your good health. Your agent, Rajab Ali Khan, has just this moment delivered your friendly letter, asking me the cause of my detaining Mulla Saifullah so long. The reason why I detained him the first five days was that it was awfully cold when he arrived here; and afterwards he fell ill, and consequently I could not dismiss him. You may rest assured that my object in detaining him was only to give him rest and show him hospitality. Always consider me desirous of hearing the news of your good health.

Inclosure 28 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated April 9, 1878.

(After compliments.)

YOUR friendly letter, dated the $\frac{15}{2}$th August, 1877, corresponding to the 19th Shaban, 1294 H., which you sent by the hands of Rajab Ali Khan, has reached me. As it contained the news of your good health, it opened the doors of extreme delight to the face of my heart, full of affection. Whereas your agent has been given leave to depart, I have written you this friendly epistle. I hope that you, in accordance with the forms of concord and friendship, will always gratify me with the happy news of your good health.

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* Already laid in "Central Asia No. 1 (1880)," p. 88.

Inclosure 29 in No. 1.

Reply by Wazir Shah Muhammed to Letter from the Governor of Katti-Kurghan to Arsala Khan, Afghon Foreign Minister, dated about April 1878.

(After compliments.)

I HAVE received your cordial letter just at this auspicious moment, when your agent, Rajab Ali Khan, has had the honour of waiting upon His Highness the Ameer. Its contents impart the expressions of kindness and favour from His Imperial Majesty the Czar to His Highness the Ameer. You write that His Majesty the Emperor has expressed a wish to cultivate friendly relations with His Highness the Ameer Shere Ali Khan. There is no doubt that the enlightened heart of His Majesty, owing to his greatness and grandeur, anxiously wishes to see his neighbours happy and comfortable; and why should it not be so, when it is a thing which adds grace to and becomes his magnanimity? It is also the wish of His Highness the Ameer to see his neighbours and the subjects of the two States happy and comfortable.

Inclosure 30 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated June 1878.

BE it known to you that in these days the relations between the British Government and ours with regard to your kingdom require deep consideration. As I am unable to communicate my opinion verbally to you I have deputed my agent, Major-General Stolieteff. This gentleman is a near friend of mine, and performed excellent services in the late Russo-Turkish war, by which he earned favour of the Emperor. The Emperor has always had a regard for him. He will inform you of all that is hidden in my mind. I hope you will pay great attention to what he says, and believe him as you would myself, and after due consideration you will give him your reply; meanwhile be it known to you that your union and friendship with the Russian Government will be beneficial to the latter and still more so to you. The advantages of a close alliance with the Russian Government will be permanently evident.

This friendly letter is written by the Governor-General of Turkestan, and Adjutant-General to the Emperor, Von Kaufmann.

Tashkend, Jamadiul Akhar 1295 (June 1878).

[The following is reckoned as a second letter, but it appears to be merely another translation of the above]:—

(After compliments.)

Be it known to you that our relations with the British Government are of great importance to Afghanistan and its dependencies. As I am unable to see you, I have deputed my trustworthy (official) General Stolieteff to you. The General is an old friend of mine, and during the late Russo-Turkish war earned the favour of the Emperor by his spirit and bravery. He has become well known to the Emperor. This trustworthy person will communicate to you what he thinks best. I hope you will pay attention to what he says, and repose as much confidence in his words as if they were my own; and that you will give your answer in this matter through him. In the meantime be it known to you that, if a friendly Treaty will be of benefit to us, it will be of far greater benefit to yourself.

Inclosure 31 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated August 23, 1878.

(After compliments.)

YOUR friendly letter, dated the 12th February, 1878,* corresponding to the 10th Safar 1295 H. (sent by the hands of Nasir Khan), giving an account of the battles

* This letter is missing.

that have been fought between the Russians and the Turks, as well as of the events which have occurred at Kashgar, and inquiring regarding the coolness which has taken place between the British Government and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, reached me on Tuesday, the 12th Rabi-us-Sani 1295 H. (16th April, 1878). I have fully understood its contents from the beginning to the end. In these days, as I wished to give Nasir Khan leave to depart, I was going to reply to your letter, but by a happy chance a mission, under the command of Major-General Stolieteff, was deputed by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor to this Court. The General delivered to me at the first interview your two friendly letters, which he brought from you from Tashkend. I have fully understood the contents of the letters, as well as the verbal representations of the above-named General, who has your full confidence, as well as that of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor. He has reduced to writing the verbal representations, the object of which was to strengthen the friendly relations between the illustrious Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, and made it over to me. I have communicated my replies to your letters to the said General, who will state them to you verbally. He will soon leave this and wait upon you, and state all matters in detail.

With a view to show honour and respect to the General, I have appointed Kamnab Mirza Muhammud Hassan Khan and Gholam Haidar Khan, my Peshkhidmat, to accompany him as far as Tashkend.

Inclosure 32 in No. 1.

(No. 1.) *Treaty between Russian Government and Ameer Shere Ali Khan, written from memory by Mirza Muhammud Nubbee.*

THE Russian Government engages that the friendship of the Russian Government with the Government of Ameer Shere Ali Khan, Ameer of all Afghanistan, will be a permanent and perpetal one.

2. The Russian Government engages that, as Sirdar Abdulla Jan, son of the Ameer, is dead, the friendship of the Russian Government with any person whom the Ameer may appoint heir-apparent to the throne of Afghanistan, and with the heir of the heir-apparent, will remain firm and perpetual.

3. The Russian Government engages that if any foreign enemy attacks Afghanistan, and the Ameer is unable to drive him out, and asks the assistance of the Russian Government, the Russian Government will repel the enemy, either by means of advice, or such other means as it may consider proper.

4. The Ameer of Afghanistan will not wage war with any foreign Power without consulting the Russian Government, and without its permission.

5. The Ameer of Afghanistan engages that he will always report in a friendly manner to the Russian Government what goes on in his kingdom.

6. The Ameer of Afghanistan will communicate every wish and important affair of his to General Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkestan, and the Governor-General will be authorized by the Russian Government to fulfil the wishes of the Ameer.

7. The Russian Government engages that the Afghan merchants who may trade and sojourn in Russian territory will be safe from wrong, and that they will be allowed to carry away their profits.

8. The Ameer of Afghanistan will have the power to send his servants to Russia to learn arts and trades, and the Russian officers will treat them with consideration and respect as men of rank.

9. [Does not remember.]

10. I, Major-General Stolieteff Nicholas, being a trusted Agent of the Russian Government, have made the above-mentioned Articles between the Russian Government and the Government of Ameer Shere Ali Khan, and have put my seal to them.

(No. 2.) *Terms of the Russo-Afghan Treaty, written from memory by Mirza Muhammud Hassan.*

FRIENDSHIP has from old time existed between our Government and the Afghan Government, and now it is renewed.

2. The friendship of both Governments with the heir-apparent, whoever he may be, and with the heir of the heir-apparent, will remain firm.

3. Everything will be reported by the Ameer to the Yarim Badshah, *i.e.*, the (Russian) Governor (General of Turkestan).

4. The Russian Government will, through the Governor (General of Turkestan) assist the Ameer with troops, if ever he is attacked by a foreign Power.

5. The Ameer should affirm his power in the country. The Russian Government will, of course, call to account any members of his family, or other person, who may, intrigue or rise against him.

6. As friendship exists between the two Governments, it is proper that our merchants should go to Afghanistan, for the benefit of both parties.

7. The ancient country of Afghanistan will be returned to the Ameer, when, by the help of God, existing difficulties are overcome by the aid of troops.

Inclosure 33 in No. 1.

Letter from General Stolieteff to Afghan Foreign Minister, dated September 21, 1878.

THANK God I reached Tashkend safely, and at an auspicious moment paid my respect to the Viceroy (Yaroni Padshah means half King). I am trying day and night to gain our objects, and hope I shall be successful. I am starting to see the Emperor to-day in order to inform His Majesty personally of our affairs. If God pleases, everything that is necessary will be done and affirmed. I hope that those who want to enter the gate of Cabul from the east will see that the door is closed, then please God they will tremble. I hope you will give my respects to His Highness the Ameer. May God make his life long and increase his wealth! May you remain in good health, and know that the protection of God will arrange our affairs!

Inclosure 34 in No. 1.

Letter from General Stolieteff to Wazir Shah Muhammud Khan, dated October 8, 1878.

FIRST of all, I hope you will be kind enough to give my respects to the Ameer. May God make his life long and increase his wealth! I shall always remember his Royal hospitality. I am busy day and night in his affairs, and thank God my labours have not been without result. The great Emperor is a true friend of the Ameer's and of Afghanistan, and His Majesty will do whatever he may think necessary. Of course you have not forgotten what I told you that the affairs of kingdoms are like a country which has many mountains, valleys, and rivers. One who sits on a high mountain can see these things well. By the power and order of God there is no empire equal to that of our great Emperor. May God make his life long. Therefore, whatever our Government advises you, you should give ear to it. I tell you the truth that our Government is wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. There are many things which you cannot understand, but our Government understands them well. It often happens that a thing which is unpleasant at first is regarded as a blessing afterwards. Now, my kind friend, I inform you that the enemy of your famous religion wants to make peace with you through the Kaisar (Sultan) of Turkey. Therefore, you should look to your brothers who live on the other side of the river. If God stirs them up, and gives the sword of fight into their hands, then go on in the name of God (Bismilla); otherwise you should be as a serpent; make peace openly, and in secret prepare for war; and when God reveals His order to you, declare yourself. It will be well when the Envoy of your enemy wants to enter the country, if you send an able emissary, possessing the tongue of a serpent and full of deceit, to the enemy's country, so that he may, with sweet words, perplex the enemy's mind, and induce him to give up the intention of fighting with you. My kind friend, I entrust you to the protection of God. May God be the protector of the Ameer's kingdom, and may trembling fall upon the limbs of your enemies. Amen.

Write to me soon and send the letter to the capital. Please write in Arabic characters, so that I may be able to read your letter.

Inclosure 35 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated October 1878.

(After compliments.)

THE following are the events that occurred here lately. After the departure of General Stolieteff, the Ambassador of the illustrious Government from the capital to Tashkend, the officers of the British Government have become audacious, and have openly assumed a hostile attitude towards the people of this God-granted Government, and girded their loins to cause them mischief—facts of which you may have been made aware by letter from Pulkawnick.* As I now write they have advanced as far as Khyber, the frontier of the God-granted territory of Afghanistan. They have completed their preparations for an expedition. It now only remains for us to encounter each other. In short, matters have now passed the stage of temporizing, that is to say, they are proving aggressors. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of the officers of this God-granted Government to protect, according to their power and ability, the frontiers and the lives and property (of the people), but the fire of this disturbance is not likely to be extinguished; and soon after this friendly letter reaches you, you will hear that the British and the Afghan Governments have got involved in war. Relying upon your friendship, I expect that you will bestow your particular attention on the subject, and lend me your friendly aid in any way you think proper. I beg to inclose with this friendly letter copy of a cordial letter sent to His Imperial Majesty the Czar for your perusal. Although it was befitting and necessary to forward the Emperor's letter by the hands of a respectable and confidential agent, yet, as there was no time to lose, it was sent by the chapars sowars (mounted coursers). No doubt the excuse is quite apparent and reasonable.

Inclosure 36 in No. 1.

Letter (inclosed in above) from Shere Ali to the Emperor of Russia, dated October 9, 1878.

(After compliments.)

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of friendship and amity, it is necessary to acquaint your Imperial Majesty with the occurrence of certain incidents and events, I beg to write that since the day the doors of friendly correspondence have been opened between your Majesty's powerful Government and this God-granted Government, and friendly communications have passed between them, the hearts of the officers of the British Government have been severely hurt. For a long time they have been annoying and harassing the officials of this God-granted Government, and many untoward acts, which are inconsistent with the forms of neighbourhood, have proceeded from them. The fire of their malice and device had not yet been put down when your Majesty's Mission arrived at my capital, Cabul, and strung the pearls of friendly sentiments on the thread of statement. This circumstance aggravated their opposition and enmity. After the arrival of your Majesty's Mission they assumed a hostile attitude, both publicly and privately, and behaved improperly, and showed hospitality in many different ways. First they proceeded to Jamrud, a place on my frontier, with a large number of followers, whom they called the escort (*lit.* camp), ostensibly on a mission, and in reality with the intention of causing mischief to this God-granted Government, and wished to pass on to the capital without permission, and satisfy their desire to insult your Majesty's Mission. As the officers and the Commandants of the outposts of this God-granted Empire smote the breasts of their desire (request) with the hand of rejection, saying that to form friendship by force and to send a Mission with such a crowd and uproar was contrary to the custom and usage of all nations, they returned to Peshawur, and are now busy organizing expeditions to Afghanistan, and have sent Proclamations of war to every nook and corner, and are using their utmost endeavours to sap the foundation of the Afghan Kingdom. Notwithstanding all this, the officers of this God-granted Government have as yet done nothing unfriendly or hostile, and have considered it far from prudence and caution to begin the first act of hostility. But it is a fact that the more we give in the more hostile they become. The British Government this day stands in the same position with regard to the Afghan Government as it did about forty years ago, viz., in those days an Ambassador of the illustrious Russian Government and an Agent of the British Government had arrived in

* *i.e.*, Colonel, meaning Colonel Rozgonoff, a member of General Stolieteff's Mission, who remained at Cabul.

Afghanistan. The late Ameer, led by his sound judgment, preferred the friendship of your Imperial Majesty to that of the English Government, and Afghanistan in consequence suffered what it suffered. In short, the English are determined upon war, and the subjects of this God-granted Government will defend their frontier, their lives, and property to the best of their ability. Let us see what Providence wills to result from this war, and what He will bring to pass.

The above is the unqualified statetement of the situation of affairs from the beginning to the end, which I write for the information of your Imperial Majesty. I hope your Majesty will kindly send me friendly assisstance befitting the greatness of your Imperial Majesty for the maintenance of the tranquillity of Afghanistan.

Iuclosure 37 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General Stolieteff, dated October 1878.

(After compliments.)

DURING the time you stayed in the capital and had friendly conversations, you learnt the evil intentions of the English towards Afghanistan, and since you left for Tashkend their inimical disposition has been getting strong day by day, and have recently assumed publicly and openly a hostile attitude towards the Afghans. You have already been made perfectly aware of the state of affairs by the letters of Pulkawnich.* I have received no news from you for some time past. Matters have now passed temporizing, and war is imminent. They are the aggressors. Had it been in the power of the officers of this God-granted Government they would have avoided the rupture by temporizing, but it now remains to be seen what will appear from behind the curtain.

I lost no time in communicating the above circumstances to His Imperial Majesty the Czar and to General von Kaufmann, and now I beg to inform you of the same, so that you may be pleased to render such friendly assistance as may be thought proper, and as may become the grandour of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

Inclosure 38 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated November 4, 1878.

(After compliments.)

YOUR two friendly letters, one dated 21st September (1st October, 1878), corresponding to 4th Shawal, 1295 H., intimating that Pulkawnich Karadikoff, having been appointed to travel in Persia, left Tashkend and had reached Mazar-i-Sharif viâ Maimana, on his way to Persia, and expressing your hopes that the Governors of Afghanistan will not withhold their help from the said Pulkawnich; and the other letter, dated $\frac{3}{15}$th October, 1878, corresponding to 19th Shawal, intimating the appointment of Pulkawnich Matyoff, with a certain number of followers, to travel in Trans-Oxiana, and expressing your hopes that the Governors of the Government of Afghanistan will help the said Matyoff in his travels, reached me on the 25th Shawal (22nd October), and the 4th Zikadah (31st October) respectively. I read them and mastered their contents. According to your recommendation I have issued strict orders to the Governors of this God-granted Government to the effect that they should pass on Pulkawnich Karadikoff through Afghanistan to the borders of Persia, and treat him with great respect and consideration. In the like manner they will show respect and hospitality to Pulkawnich Matyoff and his followers, who intended to visit Kulab, Hissar, Badakshan, and Kafiristan. But you should warn him that Kafiristan, being the country of the savages and mountaineers, who are like beasts in habit and devoid of reason, is not a place to travel in. He should be on his guard. No Afghan has ever visited this country, nor would any one venture to do so. It now rests with you to do whatever you like regarding his travels. Out of friendship, I beg to inform you that, owing to the above obstacles (dangers), travelling in Kafiristan requires great precaution.

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* *i.e.*, Colonel, meaning Colonel Rozgonoff.

Inclosure 39 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated November 4, 1878.

(After compliments.)

BE it known to you that your letter, dated the 12th Shawal, reached me at Tashkend on the 16th (30th) October, *i.e.*, the 3rd Zekada, and I understood its contents. I have telegraphed an abstract of your letter to the address of the Emperor, and have sent the letter itself, as also that addressed to General Stolieteff, by post to Livadia, where the Emperor now is. I am informed on good authority that the English want to come to terms with you; and as a friend I advise you to make peace with them if they offer it.

Inclosure 40 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated November 20, 1878.

(After compliments.)

YOUR friendly letter, dated the 22nd October, 1878, corresponding to the 8th Zikadah, 1295 H., sent by the hands of the officials of this God-granted Government, has been perused by me. I have mastered the contents thereof. Before the arrival of the same letter, one from the officers of the British Government containing very severe, harsh, and hostile expressions had reached me. I read it and made it over to Rosgonoff, the Envoy of the illustrious Government, and he sent a Russian translation of the same to you. While I was writing a reply to the letter in question, answering all the queries, your letter reached me. You have written that I should make peace with them.* I know from the conduct and manners of the British Government that they will never withdraw from their enmity towards this God-granted Government. They will not listen to any overtures for reconciliation, and the removal of the misunderstanding, although no shots have as yet been exchanged. I have, however, according to your friendly advice given me by command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, made overtures for peace;† that is to say, I have sent a friendly reply to their letter, containing civil and polite expressions, copy of which I beg to send herewith, so that you may read it and learn the facts of the case. What the British Government intends to do with regard to the invitation of Afghanistan remains to be seen. I trust that you will gratify me from time to time with an account of your good health.

Inclosure 41 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated November 26, 1878.

(After compliments.)

I WAS much pleased to receive your letter, dated 24th Zekadah 1295 (18th November, 1878), and hear of your good health. I have also received a copy of the letter which you sent to the Governor-General. May God be pleased with you. The British Ministers have given a pledge to our Ambassador in London that they will not interfere with the independence of Afghanistan. I am directed by His Majesty the Emperor to communicate this news to you, and then after forming friendship to go to His Majesty. I intend to go to the Russian capital after I have arranged the affairs of this country (Turkestan). As I do not consider it advisable to keep your trusted officials, whom you are in want of, here any more, I send Muhammud Hassan Khan, Kamuah (Deputy-Governor), and Gholam Haidar Khan, with two officers, back to you. I hope you will consider me a well-wisher of your kingdom, and write to me now and then. I have given instructions that, until my return, every letter of yours which they receive at Turkestan should be forwarded to the capital. Your good fortune is a cause of happiness to me, and if any troubles come upon you I shall be grieved. Some presents have been sent by me through Mirza Muhammud Hassan, Kamuah; perhaps they may be accepted.

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* *Lit.*, should make over a branch of the tree of peace to them.

† *Lit.*, given them a branch of the tree of peace.

Inclosure 42 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Colonel Rosgonoff, dated December 1878.

THE Ameer knows perfectly well that it is impossible for me to assist him with troops in winter; therefore it is necessary that war should not be commenced at this unseasonable time. If the English, in spite of the Ameer's exertions to avoid the war, commence it, you must then take leave of the Ameer, and start for Tashkend, because your presence in Afghanistan in winter is useless. Moreover, at such a juncture as the commencement of war in Afghanistan, you ought to come here and explain the whole thing to me, so that I may communicate it to the Emperor. This will be of great benefit to Afghanistan and to Russia.

Inclosure 43 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to the Envoy sent by him with General Stolieteff (Mirza Muhammud Hassan Khan), dated December 8, 1878.

(After compliments.)

THE following is the state of affairs in this place. The English have in no way ceased to carry out their intention of interfering with Afghanistan. I have addressed a letter to the British Government, in which, in accordance with the friendly advice of my friend General Kaufmann, the Governor-General of Turkestan, gave me, by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, I have made overtures for peace, but they took no notice of it, and attacked my Thanadars at Ali Musjid with twenty regiments. There were five regiments under my Thanadars. Many were killed and wounded on both sides in the fight. Seven or eight days after this occurrence they came in great force upon my Thanadars stationed at the Kuram cantonments. At first they suffered a defeat, but the second time they defeated my troops, and there was some loss on either side. The number of killed and wounded on both sides was much greater here than at Ali Musjid; in short, matters have now culminated in fighting, and they expect to take Afghanistan in a short time. Now, as this is the time for His Imperial Majesty the Emperor to lend friendly assistance, I have addressed a letter to my kind friend the Governor of Turkestan requesting him not to withhold the aid of troops at this time of need, in accordance with the requirements of the friendship between the two Governments, and not to defer the aid till some other time, but to send to Afghan Turkestan the 32,000 troops of Tashkend which General Stolieteff told me in your presence were ready, and would be dispatched whenever I required them. I allow you to urge both day and night the Russian Government of Turkestan for aid, and do not delay in this matter.

Inclosure 44 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated December 8, 1878.

(After compliments.)

YOU have been informed from time to time by my letters, as well as by those from the Ambassador of the illustrious Russian Government who was in Cabul, of the acts of enmity evinced by the British Government towards this God-granted Government. Lately the enmity of the British Government has reached such a pitch, that although I according to your friendly advice, given me by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, sent them a reply to their last letter and made overtures for peace therein,* yet they have vigorously attacked with twenty regiments my five regiments stationed at Ali Musjid under the command of my Thanadar. Many lives were lost on both sides, and many were wounded. A few days after the battle of Ali Musjid they attacked with an overwhelming force my Thanadars stationed at Kuram, and a severe fighting took place. The battle continued for two days. At first they (the English) suffered a defeat, but afterwards they defeated my Thanadars. There was a greater loss sustained in this battle on either side than in that of Ali Musjid both in killed and wounded. Under these

* *Lit.*, given them a branch of the tree of peace.

circumstances, and at the advice of the gentry of Afghanistan, I sent the families of the nobles to Turkestan, and have also ordered all the people of Afghanistan to send their families to Kohistan and prepare themselves to fight. Although the British officers have received my letters, yet they have not ceased to show their open enmity. Their troops are pouring in with a view to take Afghanistan, and they expect to bring the war to a close in a short time, and take the capital, Cabul. My friend, I therefore beg to acquaint you with what I have in my mind, and beg to write that as there exists perfect concord between the illustrious Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and the God-granted Government of Afghanistan, both on account of the old friendship and the recent alliance concluded through General Stolieteff on the part of His Imperial Majesty, should any harm or injury, which God forbid, befall the Afghan Government, the dust of blame will certainly settle on the skirt of His Imperial Majesty's Government. As the interests of the two Governments are identical, I expect, as a matter of course, aid in men from you. I hope that you will collect all troops available under your command at Tashkend, and dispatch them to Afghan Turkestan. Again I write to you that General Rosgonoff, the Envoy of the illustrious Government, stated that he had received an order from you that when matters get worse between the English and the Afghans, he should take leave from me and depart for Turkestan, and, consequently, he asked for leave, but I did not think it advisable to give him leave at present, for the sake of the mutual welfare of the two Governments, and for certain other considerations.

Inclosure 45 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated December 22, 1878.

(After compliments.)

PREVIOUS to this I informed your Excellency that the troops of the British Government had advanced on the territory of Afghanistan; that actions had been fought between us and them; that they paid no attention to the communications which I had addressed to them in accordance with the friendly advice which you gave me by the command of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, viz., that I should make peace with them. I hope you have learned all the facts referred to above. After I had dispatched the letter to you, all the gentry and Chiefs of Afghanistan waited upon me, and represented that the English had no other object but that we should not cultivate friendly relations with the illustrious Russian Government; that we should not let the Envoy of that Government visit our country, but that these (proposals) were not feasible now, as that illustrious Government, notwithstanding its greatness, had held out its hand of friendship; that we had renewed our friendship with it on a stronger basis than before; that we are now firm and strong in our friendship and amity; that if we all be ruined as we were forty years ago, nothing would disturb the basis of our alliance with that Government; that they were all of opinion that I should start for St. Petersburgh, the capital of His Majesty the Emperor, in person, and have a congress* held there to inquire into, and settle, my cause with the English after asking them what right they had to advance on Afghanistan. They added that, God willing, my journey to Russia will produce many advantages, and that the right will not be overlooked in the capital of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor. Conformably to the advice of my well-wishers, having resolved upon visiting St. Petersburgh, I have left my son, Sirdar Yakoub Khan, in charge of all my troops, Chiefs, and the property of the State, entrusted him with the civil and military government, and departed with a small number of officials for my destination. The above is the state of affairs, which I have written for your Excellency's information, who feels sympathy for the Afghan Government, and is a kind friend and the regulator of this God-granted Government.

Inclosure 46 in No. 1.

Firman issued by the Ameer Shere Ali dated December 22, 1878.†

WE received letters from the Governor-General, General Stolieteff, at the station named Sar Cheshmeh; Stolieteff, who was with the Emperor at Livadia having written to us as follows:—

* The English word "congress" is used.

† Already laid in "Afghanistan No 7 (1879)," p. 8.

"The Emperor considers you as a brother, and you also, who are on the other side of the water, must display the same sense of friendship and brotherhood. The English Government is anxious to come to terms with you through the intervention of the Sultan, and wishes you to take his advice and counsel; but the Emperor's desire is that you should not admit the English into your country; and, like last year, you are to treat them with deceit and deception until the present cold season passes away; then the Almighty's will will be made manifest to you, that is to say, the (Russian) Government having repeated the Bismillah, the Bismillah will come to your assistance. In short, you are to rest assured that affairs will end well. If God permits, we will convene a Government meeting at St. Petersburgh, that is to say, a congress, which means an assemblage of Powers. We will then open an official discussion with the English Government, and either by force of words and diplomatic action we will entirely cut off all English communication and interference with Afghanistan for ever, or else events will end in a mighty and important war. By the help of God, by spring not a symptom or vestige of trouble and dissatisfaction will remain in Afghanistan."

It therefore behoves our well-wishing servants to conduct the affairs entrusted to them in a praiseworthy and resolute manner better than before, and having placed their hopes in God, rest confident that the welfare and affairs of this glorious Government will continue on a firm footing as before, and the mischief and disaffection which seem to have arisen in the country will disappear.

Let it be known to the high in rank, Tolmshir Bahadur and Hafizulla Khan, Secretary to the Sipah Salar-i-Aazim, that, thanks to God, the trouble we have been taking for a series of years in instructing and improving the officers of our victorious regiments has not been lost, and in fighting the English troops they have displayed the same bravery as the force of the civilized nations. Not one of the victorious troops went to heaven until he had himself slain three of the enemy. In short, they fought in such a way, and made such a stand, that both high and low praised them. We are fully confident that our victorious troops wherever they may fight will defeat the enemy.

The Herat army is also noted for its bravery and discipline, a result of your devoted services. You will convey our royal satisfaction to all the troops and inhabitants of Herat, high and low, and tell them that our hope is that God and his Prophet may be as satisfied with them as we are.

Inclosure 47 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated January 2, 1879.

I HAVE received your friendly letter, dated 13th Zel Hijja (8th December, 1878). In that letter you asked me to send you as many troops as could be got ready. I have written to you a letter to the effect that the Emperor, on account of your troubles, had communicated with the British Government, and that the Russian Ambassador at London had obtained a promise from the British Ministers to the effect that they would not injure the independence of Afghanistan. Perhaps you sent your letter before you got mine. Now I have heard that you have appointed your son Muhammud Yakoub as your Regent, and have come out of Cabul with some troops. I have received an order from the Emperor to the effect that it is impossible to assist you with troops now. I hope you will be fortunate. It all depends on the decree of God. Believe me, that the friendship which I made with you will be perpetual. It is necessary to send back General Rozgonoff and his companions. You can keep Dr. Yuralski with you, if you please. No doubt the doctor will be of use to you and to your dependents. I hope our friendship will continue to be strengthened, and that intercourse will be carried on between us.

Inclosure 48 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated January 7, 1879.

YOUR letter, dated 27th Zel Hijja (22nd December, 1878), has reached me. I was pleased to hear tidings of your good health. The Emperor has caused the British Government to agree to the continuance of Afghan independence. The English Ministers have promised this. I earnestly request you not to leave your kingdom. As far as possible, consider your own interests, and do not lose your independence. For the present, come to terms with the British Government. If you do not want to go back to Cabul for this purpose, you can write to your son, Muhammud Yakoub Khan, to make peace with the English as you may direct him. Do not leave the soil of Afghanistan at this time, because it will be of benefit to you. My words are not without truth, because your arrival in Russian territory will make things worse.

Inclosure 49 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Shere Ali, dated January 11, 1878.

(After compliments.)

THE Foreign Minister, General Gortchacow, has informed me by telegraph that the Emperor has directed me to trouble you to come to Tashkend for the present. I, therefore, communicate this news to you with great pleasure; at the same time I may mention that I have received no instructions about your journey to St. Petersburgh. My personal interview with you will increase our friendship greatly.

Inclosure 50 in No. 1.

Letter from Shere Ali to General von Kaufmann, dated February 2, 1879.

(After compliments.)

AFTER my arrival at Mazir-i-Sharif at this time your three friendly letters, dated 8th, 13th, and 17th Muharram (2nd, 7th, and 11th January, 1879), respectively, came to hand. I perused them and understood their contents. The sweet (pleasing) expressions contained in your letter of the 17th has sweetened the palate of my desire and the flavour of the Royal favours of His Majesty the Emperor, and the desire of having a joyous interview with you have fixed my intention to visit Russia. I had determined to start for my destination shortly, as, after consultation with the Envoy of the illustrious Government, I intimated my intention to His Majesty the King of Bokhara, but, by the decree of God, I was suddenly attacked with catarrh and a fit of gout, and am now under the treatment of the Russian doctor and my own physicians. This circumstance has prevented me from proceeding on my journey.

Whereas the time is passing away, I have given the Envoy leave to return, and deputed my brother, Sirdar Shere Ali Khan, Shah Muhammud Khan, and Kazi Abdul Kadir Khan, who are the trustees and Ministers of the God-granted Government, with all speed to Tashkend to wait upon you without delay and represent to you verbally the state of affairs here, and remind you of that passage in your letter, which conveyed a reassurance to me, and which is to the effect that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor has exacted an agreement from the British Government to Afghanistan retaining its independence, and that the British Ministers have given an assurance to your Ambassador in London that they will not interfere with the independence of Afghanistan. But the English, notwithstanding that agreement and assurance, have advanced from Sherabad to Jellalabad, and from Pisheen to Candahar, an account of which events the Ministers of this God-granted Government will give you in detail. I hope that you will consider whatever my Ministers may state regarding the affairs of this God-granted Government true, and will kindly dismiss them with as little delay as possible after complying with their request.

Let it be known to you that I am exceedingly pleased with the noble qualities and

good manners of General Rosgonoff and his companions. Indeed, the General is a conscientious and able officer of his own illustrious Government and a well-wisher of this God-granted Government.

Inclosure 51 in No. 1.

*Letter from General von Kaufmann to Yakoub Khan, dated March 9, 1879.**

WISHING you complete happiness, the following are my words:—

With deep sorrow I heard the sad news of the demise of my friend, your all-beloved just father, the Ameer Sahib, and I sincerely lament the heavy loss sustained by you and by the country of Afghanistan.

Your Highness being the lawful heir—and having been called upon to become the Ruler of the country by your late father himself, at a time of dire visitation sent by God—have now ascended the throne.

I offer you my felicitations and my most sincere wishes of every good.

As a friend of your late amiable father, I hope that you will foster the same good disposition and the same confidence towards me as did your father, the late Ameer Sahib.

I wish your Highness wisely and justly to rule the people, who will not abandon you in these hard times, and who will be always ready to stand up for, and defend, your throne.

The Envoys of your late father, the Ameer Sahib, Sirdar Shere Ali Khan, Wazir Shah Mahomed Khan, Kazi Abdul Kader, and the Kemnal-Dabir Mahomed Hassan, are returning to be at your service. I am convinced that these men, who faithfully served your father, will as faithfully serve your Highness.

May God grant you wisdom, health, and the love of your people!

The Governor-General of Turkestan, Adjutant-General,
(Signed) VON KAUFMANN, 1st.

City of Tashkend, February 25,† 1879 (16*th Rabil-ul-Awul,* 1296 *H.*).

[N.B.—The Russian note at foot of the vernacular page testifies the correctness of the translation. It is signed by "Collegien Rath Nerasimof" or "Norasimof," and is dated Tashkend, the 25th February, 1879.]

Inclosure 52 in No. 1.

Letter from Major-General Ivanoff to Sirdar Musa Khan (son of Yakoub Khan) dated March 29, 1879.‡

ON the 26th of Rabi-ul-Awul (20th March), at an auspicious moment, I received your letter which you sent to me, and understood its contents. I was very much pleased, and at once communicated it to General Kaufmann, the Governor-General. With regard to what you wrote about the friendly relations between the Russian and Afghan Governments, and your own desire for friendship, I have the honour to state that we are also desirous of being friends. The friendship between the two Governments existed in the time of the late Ameer, and I hope that it will be increased and strengthened by Ameer Muhammud Yakoub Khan. May God change the wars in your country to happiness; may peace reign in it; and may your Government be strengthened. I have been forwarding all your letters to the Governor-General, General Kaufmann. May God keep you safe.

The Zarafshan Province Governor,
(Signed) IVANOFF, *Major-General.*

Written and sealed by the General.

Written on 29th Mart (March), 1879 (5th Rabi-ul-Sani, 1296).

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* Already laid in "Afghanistan No. 1 (1880)," p. 10. † New style, March 9.
‡ Already laid in "Afghanistan No. 1 (1880)," p. 169.

Inclosure 53 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Sirdar Musa Khan, dated April 8, 1879.*

TO the highly respected the Crown Prince of the Afghan throne, Sirdar Mahomed Musa Khan; to Ulam Aidar Khan;† to Ameer Mahomed; to Nur Mahomed;‡ and to Khabibulla.

I wish you all constantly to enjoy the favour and the goodwill of the new ruler, the Ameer Sahib.

After which the following are my words:—

I cannot but tell you candidly that the news of the demise of my friend the Ameer Sahib Shere Ali Khan has profoundly grieved me. From your letter of the 26th,§ Rabi-ul-Awul, I learnt that you, Sirdar Mahomed Musa Khan, as being the lawful heir, have been chosen by the Vaaliat, which proves the good disposition and attachment of the Afghan people towards your family and your race. To me, an old friend of your late grandfather, this news has given unspeakable joy.

I wish you all good fortune in all your good undertakings, and likewise that you may prove powerful supporters of the fortunate Ameer Sahib Mahomed Yakoub Khan. God grant it.

The Governor-General of Turkestan, Adjutant-General,
(Signed) VON KAUFMANN.

City of Tashkend, March 27 (*new style, April* 8), 1879.

[N.B.—The Russian note at the foot of the vernacular page testifies the correctness of the translation, and it is signed by "Collegien Rath Nerasimof" or "Norasimof." It is dated Tashkend, the 27th March, 1879.]

Inclosure 54 in No. 1.

Letter from General von Kaufmann to Yakoub Khan, dated May 7, 1879.‖

AFTER my wishes and prayers for your Highness' safety and prosperity, I take the opportunity to write that, having bidden (a temporary) farewell to the affairs of the State entrusted to my charge,¶ I intend to start for the metropolis of the Russian Empire on the 15th May, corresponding to the first week of Jamadi-us-Sani. I therefore beg to intimate this my intention to your Highness, and hope that your Highness, considering me your sincere friend and staunch well-wisher, will keep me informed of every occurrence that takes place in your Highness' dominions while I am away.

I have given orders that any letters that may be received from the Great Ameer (your Highness) during my absence should be forwarded with all possible despatch to St. Petersburgh. May the Most High God prolong your Highness' life and grant your Highness a great victory.

(Here the seal of the General.)
(Here his signature in Russian.)

Dated April 25 (*new style, May* 7), 1879.

The above letter from General Von Kaufmann was entrusted to a special messenger. Its despatch was notified by the Russian Governor of Katti Kurgan to General Gholam Hyder Ali, Deputy-Governor of Afghan Turkestan, in the following communication, dated 29th April (new style, 11th May):—

"So long as the system of the universe continues in its working order through the instrumentality of Providence, so long may the Most Merciful and Gracious God continue you, who hold a high dignity and rank, and who do not stand in need of any praise or eulogy, on the path of prosperity, and maintain you on the masnad of authority, and make your days roll on agreeably to your wishes for the sake of the Chief of the Prophets and his holy posterity.

* Already laid in "Afghanistan No. 1 (1880)," p. 10.

† General Gholam Hyder Khan, late Deputy-Governor of Afghan Turkestan.

‡ Nur Muhammud Khan, son of the late Sirdar Sultan Muhammud Khan, half-brother of the late Ameer Dost Muhammud Khan.

§ 20th March.

‖ Already laid in "Afghanistan No. 1 (1880)," p. 12.

¶ According to the Russian version, "on behalf of matter connected with the region entrusted to me."

"I beg to inform you that my servant Nasir Khan is, at this happy moment, leaving with a letter from the Governor of the Province of Turkestan for His Highness the Ameer Mahomed Yakoub Khan, whose assistance is highly valued. It is hoped that you, out of regard for friendship, will send the man on with your own servant and cause him to be presented to the Ameer with the letter, and that you will kindly inform me of the delivery of the letter and the presentation of the man to the Ameer, as well as of the state of His Highness' health.

"This will not, of course, be more than a friend will do for a friend. May God make you happy and prosperous both in this world and the next, for the sake of His Prophet and His posterity."

Inclosure 55 in No. 1.

Letter from Yakoub Khan to General von Kaufmann, dated July 26, 1879.*

YOUR friendly letter, dated the 7th May, reached me by the hands of Nasir Khan, and I fully understood all the friendly and neighbourly meanings contained in it.

The state of affairs here is that peace and friendship have been established between my Government and the British Government in a way which is conducive to the advantage of both. All cause of quarrel and misunderstanding has disappeared from between the two parties, and the officers of both Governments are now pleased and happy. As Nasir Khan has been dismissed, and is about to set out to his home, I have thought proper to answer your friendly letter, and to add that if at any time the officers of your Government, in accordance with the rules of friendship and neighbourhood, should require to communicate with my Government, either in writing or verbally, they will no doubt consider it advisable to do so through the British Ambassador at St. Petersburgh, the Russian Minister in London, his Excellency the Viceroy of India, or the British Envoy at Cabul, in conformity with the Treaty which has been concluded between my Government and the British Government.

No. 2.

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, August* 28, 1880.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me on the 23rd instant. After some conversation upon other topics, I spoke to his Excellency upon the subject of recent events in Afghanistan.

I went on to inform Prince Lobanow that the Secretary of State for India had spoken to me seriously on the subject of reports which had reached Her Majesty's Government, that Eyoub Khan had with him as officers Sarts who had been trained in the Russian army, and that this accounted for the scientific disposition of his troops and the efficiency of his artillery.

I was aware that M. de Giers had contradicted these reports, and had denied that there could have been any Russian officers with the Afghan forces; but the rumour had naturally recalled the attention of the India Office to the communications which had taken place between the Russian authorities in Central Asia and the Ameer Shere Ali, and which had been found at Cabul at the time of the British occupation.

Prince Lobanow expressed great curiosity to see these papers. He said that, soon after his arrival in London having seen an account of these documents in the newspapers, he had pressed Lord Salisbury to let him see them. Lord Salisbury had answered that it had been expressly decided by the Cabinet to consign them to oblivion in order to avoid irritating discussions between the two Governments. I gave him, for his confidential information, copies of the most important letters between General Kaufmann, General Stolieteff, and Shere Ali and his Ministers.

Prince Lobanow returned to the Foreign Office on the 26th. He told me that he had just written his despatch to his Government; that he had recapitulated what had passed between us, saying that, while stating the facts, and giving him the papers, I had not formulated any demand or made any request.

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* Already laid in "Afghanistan No. 1 (1880)," p. 12.

No. 3.

Mr. Plunkett to Earl Granville.—(Received October 11.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, October 5, 1880.*

AS I was leaving Baron Jomini this afternoon, his Excellency said there was a subject on which he wished to speak quite confidentially.

His Excellency said the Emperor had been grateful for the proof of confidence shown by your Lordship in communicating confidentially to Prince Lobanow copies of certain letters which had been found by the British troops at Cabul, and which were believed to furnish proof of secret Russian negotiations with the late Ameer. His Majesty has forwarded this correspondence to General Kaufmann, with orders to furnish him at once with the original drafts, which he supposes must be still in the General's possession, in order that His Majesty may see with his own eyes whether this intercepted correspondence is genuine or not. At the same time, His Majesty has sent to General Kaufmann the strictest orders to abstain from holding any communication whatever with the new Ameer. The Emperor had even gone so far as to direct General Kaufmann to send his reply to the Foreign Department to be forwarded through Her Majesty's Government, in case it should happen that Abdur Rahman Khan should ever write to him any of those ceremonial letters which the duties of good neighbourhood occasionally require.

No. 4.

Earl Granville to Mr. Plunkett.

Sir, *Walmer Castle, October 25, 1880.*

THE Russian Ambassador has given me assurances from his Government with regard to Russian policy in Central Asia similar to those which you have received through Baron Jomini as reported in your despatch of the 5th instant. His Excellency said that, under present circumstances, the strictest orders had been given to General Kaufmann to abstain from any interference in Afghan affairs, and to avoid any action which could give ground for objection on the part of the British authorities.

He had been called upon to furnish the Imperial Government with duplicates of the letters which had been addressed to Shere Ali, and he had been forbidden to enter into any communication even of a complimentary character with Abdul Rahman.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 5.

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, January 28, 1881.*

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me on the 24th instant, and referred to the conversation which I had with him at Walmer Castle on Central Asian affairs, and of which an account is given in my despatch of the 25th October last to Mr. Plunkett.

Prince Lobanow reminded me of what he had then told me of the instructions sent to General Kaufmann. He added that the Emperor had ordered General Kaufmann to send home copies of all the correspondence which had passed between the Russian authorities and Shere Ali or his Ministers, that this had been done, and that he had brought with him in a portfolio the whole of these papers. On comparing them with the translations which I had handed to him some months ago, he found that the latter were incorrect in places and required revision; that in one letter, of which two versions were given, a whole sentence seemed to have been added in one version which did not exist in the other or in the original, and that some confusion appeared to have been made between the words "friendship" and "alliance," the latter expression having been substituted in several places for the former. His Excellency then remarked that a perusal of the correspondence showed that nothing had been written which was not simply of a complimentary character, and known and not objected to by the Indian Government, until 1878, when the Russian Government believed a war with England to be imminent.

It was quite clear, he said, from all the correspondence, which he had studied, that the Ameer was neither Russian nor English, but an Afghan desirous of preserving the

ndependence of his country; and that when the Russians found that the Government of India by different acts had made the Ameer hostile, they, under the pressure of the state of things in Europe, eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity.

I said that there were some very disagreeable passages in the letters written subsequently to the signature of the Treaty of Berlin.

Prince Lobanow replied that at the time when the letters I referred to had been written, the news of the signature of the Treaty had not reached General Stolieteff. As soon as the Treaty had been signed orders had been sent to General Kaufmann to abstain from any proceedings of a nature unfriendly to England. It had been impossible to refuse to receive Shere Ali, and he had been shown the hospitality which was proper under the circumstances, but he had not been allowed to go to St. Petersburgh as he wished.

Time and distance had undoubtedly played a great part in the affair. For want of regular and direct communication the orders which General Kaufmann sent to General Stolieteff to moderate his zeal arrived too late, and it was thus that the impulse given in the first instance at Taskhend, in consequence of the imminence of war with England, had been prolonged at Cabul some time after the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin. Stolieteff was recalled. On leaving Cabul he had taken *ad referendum* the proposals of Shere Ali; but on his arrival in Europe the whole political situation had already changed, and the Ameer's offers were categorically rejected. Such were the real facts of the case.

As regards the reports that either Russians or Sarts trained in the Russian service had been supplied to Eyoub Khan for his campaign against the English forces, Prince Lobanow said he was able to give the most complete denial of their correctness. General Kaufmann had remarked that it was contrary to his whole policy to give the uncivilized, or half-civilized nations in Asia the advantage of European training or arms of precision, as it was impossible to tell whether they might not be turned very shortly against the donor, and a success gained over one European nation tended to make them more arrogant in their bearing towards another.

No. 6.

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

My Lord, *Foreign Office, February* 9, 1881.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me yesterday afternoon at my request, and I informed him of the nature of the answer which I proposed to return to Lord Lytton's request, that the correspondence between Shere Ali and the Russian authorities found at Cabul should be made public.

Prince Lobanow observed that it was not necessary for him to undertake the defence of the conduct of his Government before the signing of the Treaty of Berlin. It had been acknowledged to have been justifiable by the late Government both in Parliament and also to the Russian Government. He reminded me of the speech made by Lord Beaconsfield in the House of Lords on the 10th December, 1878, and he quoted the following extracts from it:—"Eight months ago war was more than probable between this country and Russia; and an imprudent word might have precipitated that war. I will say of the expedition which Russia was preparing in Central Asia at the time when she believed that war was inevitable between our country and herself,—I will say at once that I hold that all those preparations on the part of Russia were justifiable, and if war had occurred, of course they would have contributed to bring about the ultimate result, whatever that might have been. Had we been in the position of Russia I doubt not we might have undertaken some enterprise of a similar kind. We may admit that if war had occurred between the two countries all the preparations in Central Asia against Great Britain and India were justifiable, but when it was found that war was not to be made, Her Majesty's Government made becomingly courteous representations to St. Petersburgh, and it was impossible that anything could be more frank and satisfactory than the manner in which they were met."

His Excellency also showed me a despatch written by Count Schouvaloff in November 1878, giving an account of a conversation with Lord Beaconsfield on the subject of Afghanistan.

Count Schouvaloff reported Lord Beaconsfield to have said that he did not complain of the conduct of the Russian authorities during the period referred to; that he considered the course they had taken as being according to the rules of the game ("de bonne guerre") under the circumstances. Lord Beaconsfield had added that he had

wished to temporize with Shere Ali, but that the hands of the Home Government had been forced by the inopportune haste of the Indian Government, who had precipitated the matter.

Prince Lobanow went on to say that a draft Treaty between Russia and Afghanistan was drawn up, but that it was proposed by Shere Ali and taken *ad referendum* by General Stolieteff, who had taken it with him, being, when he returned from Afghanistan, still ignorant of the state of affairs in Europe.

His Excellency pointed out in General Stolieteff's letter of the 21st September, 1878, these words:—"I am trying day and night to gain our object, and I trust I shall be successful; I am starting to see the Emperor to-day in order to inform His Majesty personally of our affairs."

This was not, he said, the language of a man trying to get a plan of the Russian Government adopted, but of one who wished to further the Ameer's views.

Prince Lobanow added that the papers nowhere showed that the Russians had tried to excite the Afghans against the English. The Ameer, on his side, had been treated in a hostile manner by the Government of India, while Russia expected from day to day a declaration of war from England.

It was natural, under these circumstances, that both should be prepared to create as strong a diversion as possible against the country which seemed about to be their common enemy. But as soon as the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin was known, General Kaufmann is shown in these papers to have strongly advised the Ameer to remain quiet.

I remarked that these negotiations of General Stolieteff took place nearly three months after the Treaty of Berlin had been signed, because I put the actual ratifications out of the question, and I pointed out to Prince Lobanow that there were two letters of General Stolieteff, one after his return to Tashkend, and the other said to have been from Livadia, to which this explanation would not apply.

He answered that these letters of General Stolieteff, if they are read with attention, indicate one thing only. On the General's arrival in Russia, first at Tashkend and afterwards at Livadia, finding the situation quite changed, he was exclusively occupied with extricating himself personally from the difficulty in which he was as regards Shere Ali. After saying that he worked day and night in his interest, he told him to follow the counsels of the Russian Government, who at the very time were advising Shere Ali to make peace. As to the draft Treaty, there was not even an allusion to it.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1881).

CORRESPONDENCE respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1881.

LONDON:
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CENTRAL ASIA. No. 2 (1881).

FURTHER DESPATCH

RESPECTING

AFFAIRS IN CENTRAL ASIA.

[In continuation of "Central Asia No. 1 (1881)."]

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1881.

LONDON:
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Further Despatch respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

[In continuation of "Central Asia No. 1 (1881)".]

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

My Lord, *Foreign Office, February* 23, 1881.

PRINCE LOBANOW called upon me this afternoon, and, in the course of conversation, alluded to the notice which Mr. Arnold had given in the House of Commons of a question which he intended to ask, viz., whether any further communication had been received from the Russian Ambassador with reference to the statement attributed to Lord Beaconsfield in a despatch from Count Schouvaloff with regard to the Afghan war, "that the hands of the Home Government had been forced by the inopportune haste of the Indian Government, who had precipitated the matter."

His Excellency observed that he had no further communication to make to me. He had nothing to defend or to retract.

He hoped it would be understood that, in reading to me one sentence from the draft of a despatch recording at length an interesting and important conversation, in which Lord Beaconsfield had shown a very friendly feeling towards Russia, his object was to strengthen the case of the Russian Government, and to show that Her Majesty's late Government imputed no blame to them.

What he should greatly regret would be that he should be thought to have mixed himself up in any party differences in this country.

His Excellency added that with respect to Count Schouvaloff, it was obvious that, apart from other considerations, he could have no object at the time in inventing or misrepresenting a statement of this kind.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 2 (1881).

FURTHER DESPATCH respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

[In continuation of "Central Asia No. 1 (1881)."]

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1881.

LONDON
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 3 (1881).

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

AFFAIRS IN CENTRAL ASIA.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1881.

BOMBAY BRANCH
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Further Correspondence respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

No. 1.

The Earl of Dufferin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 5, 1880.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 31, 1879.

I HAVE the honour to state that on the 21st instant I had a long conversation with M. de Giers. Though I had thought it better to avoid any allusion to Central Asia, M. de Giers of his own accord touched upon the subject. He admitted that preparations were on foot for a large expedition against the Téké Turkomans, directed from two bases of operations, namely, Chekishler and Samarcand, assuring me, however, that it was with the greatest repugnance that Russia found herself driven into such courses.

He incidentally mentioned a report of the Turkomans of Merv having joined with the Téké Turkomans in assaulting and harassing the Russian forces during their recent retreat, and added, in a vague manner, "that it might become necessary to destroy 'ce repaire,'" hastily adding that of course there could be no intention that any Russian troops should remain there.

In reply to a question as to when the campaign was to begin, M. de Giers said that nothing was yet settled, there being great difficulty in determining which was the least unhealthy season for the contemplated operations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 2.

The Earl of Dufferin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 5, 1880.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 31, 1879.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a paragraph from the "Agence Russe" of yesterday's date, stating that the telegraph line between Chekishler and Asterabad is now in process of completion, and that some delay had been caused by the intrigues of the Turkomans.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Extract from the "Agence Russe" of December 30, 1879.

TCHIKICHLIAR.—L'établissement de la ligne télégraphique entre le poste Russe de Tchikichliar, à l'embouchure de l'Attrek et Astrabad, est en voie d'achèvement. Quelques retards dans les travaux ont été causés par la malveillance des Turcomans, qui ont tenté, par des émissaires, de pousser les ouvriers à la désertion.

No. 3.

The Earl of Dufferin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 15.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 9, 1880.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Golos" of the $\frac{27\text{th December, 1879}}{8\text{th January, 1880}}$, states that, according to the "Kavkas Messenger," the collection of provisions for the new Akhal Téké expedition has been finally completed in the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 4.

The Earl of Dufferin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 11, 1880.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a translation from the "Russki Courier," containing intelligence of the Russian expedition against the Téké Turkomans.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Extract from the "Russki Courier."

(Translation.)

THE "Russki Courier" publishes a telegram from Tiflis, dated $\frac{25\text{th December, 1879}}{6\text{th January, 1880}}$, to the effect that General Tergoukassoff had arrived at Chekishler. Eight battalions of the 21st Division of infantry remain to guard the line from Duzulum to Chekishler; the rest being allowed to return temporarily to their respective cantonments.

No. 5.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 11, 1880.

THE official newspaper "Kavkaz" contains an order of the day issued by Prince Melikoff, Commander of the Army of the Caucasus, notifying the appointment by his Imperial Majesty of General Skobeleff to the post of temporary commander of the active army of the Trans-Caspian region, and inviting him to assume his command.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 6.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 22, 1880.

ACCORDING to the newspaper "Obsor" (a Caucasian paper) General Skobeleff, Chief of the Akhal Téké expedition, who has been staying at Tiflis since the $\frac{1}{2}\frac{3}{5}$th April, left for Petrofsk, viâ Vladivostock, on the $\frac{25\text{th April}}{7\text{th May}}$. In consequence of the traffic on the Georgian military railway being suspended at that time, General Skobeleff, it is said, had to make the journey from Gudour to Kobi on foot.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 7.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 13.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, June* 10, 1880.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that M. Zinoview (my Russian colleague), at an interview which he had yesterday with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, informed his Highness that, in despatches which he had recently received, General Skobeleff informed him that the projected expedition against the Téké Turkomans would, subject to certain conditions and limits which he did not specify, be carried into execution in the course of the present year. In view of this, M. Zinoview requested the Minister for Foreign Affairs to cause orders to be sent to the Governors of Koochan and Boojnoord, instructing those officials to afford all friendly aid to General Skobeleff, and to assist his agents in the purchase of such supplies within their districts as he might require for the forces under his command. To these representations his Highness replied that this was a matter in which he must refer to His Majesty the Shah himself for instructions.

No. 8.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 8, 1880.

I HAVE the honour to inclose translation of a telegram published by the "Invalide Russe," giving the latest intelligence respecting General Skobeleff's operations against the Téké Turkomans.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 8.

Substance of Article in the "Invalide Russe" of $\frac{\text{June } 25}{\text{July } 7}$, 1880.

(Translation.)

THE "Invalide Russe" (the Russian official military organ) of the $\frac{25\text{th June}}{7\text{th July}}$, 1880, contains the following telegram, forwarded from Borjour, the summer residence of the Grand Duke Michael, in the Caucasus, respecting the operations of General Skobeleff against the Téké Turkomans:—

"General Skobeleff, with his advanced detachment from Duzir-Olum, occupied on the $\frac{28\text{th May}}{9\text{th June}}$ last Kodjam-Kala, and then reached, after a march of two days with a light column, Bami and Beurma, which were abandoned by the inhabitants on the day of his arrival. On the $\frac{11\text{th}}{23\text{rd}}$ June he finally occupied, with his advanced detachment, Bami, where he is erecting a fortification and establishing a depôt of stores. On the $\frac{16\text{th}}{28\text{th}}$ June a reconnaissance, with two guns and a rocket company, was made in the direction of Archnian, from which point the enemy retreated after a slight fusillade. No losses occurred on this occasion. Stores are being transported to Bami from the line of the Attrek, as also from the deserted settlements of the Tékés."

No. 9.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 2, 1880.

THE "Invalide Russe" of the $\frac{19\text{th}}{31\text{st}}$ July, publishes a telegram from the Grand Duke Michael, dated Borshom, $\frac{18}{30}$th July, giving an account of General Skobeleff's movements, and of the skirmishes which have lately taken place between the Imperial forces and the Tékés.

I have the honour to inclose a translation of it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of July $\frac{19}{31}$, 1880.

(Translation.)

GENERAL SKOBELEFF reports from Bami that, in order to effect a reconnaissance of the Tékés at Geok-Tépé, and to destroy the crops and stores at the auls situated between Bami and Geok-Tépé, he advanced in the direction of the latter place on the $\frac{1st}{13th}$ July from Bami, with a small column, consisting of three companies, three sotnias of Cossacks, four light field-pieces, two howitzers, and a rocket battery. After several skirmishes between the advanced guard and the enemy's cavalry at Artchman, Durun, and Akkala, the Russian column on the $\frac{5}{17}$th July occupied Egyany* and Batyr-Kala. Having formed a temporary base at these places, General Skobeleff on the $\frac{6}{18}$th July, at the head of the greater part of the column, proceeded to reconnoitre the group of auls of Dengil and Geok-Tépé.

The Russian force was met by considerable numbers of the enemy's cavalry and fought its way to within 1,000 paces of the outworks of the fortified auls; under their cover a reconnaissance of the fortifications was effected, as also a survey of the locality; on the conclusion of which, at 1 P.M., the Russian force retired. Notwithstanding the repeated attacks of the enemy's infantry and cavalry, during which hand to hand encounters occurred, the same evening the column reached Egyan and Batyr-Kala without sustaining scarcely any loss; and having, at daybreak on the $\frac{7}{19}$th July, repelled a fresh attack of the Tékés at Batyr-Kala, the column returned to Bami, after destroying a considerable number of crops and quantities of stores at the auls lying in the march.

During the nine days the casualties on the Russian side were three soldiers killed and eight wounded; they also lost eight horses killed and thirteen wounded. Such inconsiderable loss is explained by the long range and accuracy of the firing. The injury done to the enemy by the destruction of the crops, &c., in the vicinity of Geok-Tépé, where about 10,000 Tékés are concentrated, who have been joined by 700 Merv Tékés General Skobeleff reports, is felt in the difficulty the Tékés experience in obtaining supplies and in the outbreak of cattle plague. Moreover, in the engagements of the $\frac{6}{18}$th and $\frac{7}{19}$th July several Téké and Merv Chiefs were killed.

The condition of the Russian troops leaves nothing to be desired.

No. 10.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received August 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 23, 1880.*

THE "Golos" of the $\frac{8}{20}$th August announces that telegraphic communication has been extended from Chekishler to Duz-Olum, a point in the Trans-Caspian military circuit.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 11.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 21, 1880.*

ON my return from the manœuvres, I mentioned to M. de Giers that it seemed generally to be anticipated in the military circles in whose midst I had been moving, that General Skobeleff's expedition against the Turkomans was about to assume very large proportions; that it was to be set in immediate motion, and that its ultimate destination was to be Merv. I then reminded his Excellency that he had given me to understand that the operations against the Turkomans during the present year would not be upon any very considerable scale, and would be rather of a tentative character than otherwise; that it was to be confined to the chastisement of the Tékés, and that Merv was in no sense the object of attack. If any changes had come over the intentions and projects of the Emperor's Government in relation to these matters, I trusted he would have the goodness

* Marked on the map as Isgan.

to keep me informed; as otherwise his previous language would have occasioned me to leave my Government under an erroneous impression.

M. de Giers replied that he had every reason to believe that, so far as General Skobeleff's present plans were concerned, what he had formerly stated was still the case, and that, although, of course, the time would come when a considerable effort would be made to inflict effectual chastisement upon the Tékés, it was very improbable, unless General Skobeleff possessed superhuman genius, that he would be in a position to strike a blow this year.

His Excellency concluded by most emphatically denying that Merv was the ultimate objective of the expedition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 12.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 5.)*

My Lord, *Tehran, August 17, 1880.*

I HAVE just received, through the Mission Agent at Meshed, a letter from Merv, under date of the 27th ultimo, stating that a force of 3,000 men had proceeded from that place to reinforce the Akhal Turkoman forces.

No movement of Russian troops had taken place within the Bokhara territory nor on the Oxus.

News has been forwarded from three towns on the Khorassan frontier to the effect that when General Skobeleff was reconnoitring in the direction of Geuk-Tuppeh during the past month, he met with very strong opposition.

A considerable loss was incurred by his own forces as well as by the Turkomans, and the Russians too are reported to have lost a gun on this occasion.

General Skobeleff having then withdrawn his forces to Bam, returned to Europe on a short visit.

According to the same account the Akhal tribes have assembled in great numbers, and the Russians are reported to be in want of additional reinforcements.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 13.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 5.)*

(Extract.) *Tehran, August 25, 1880.*

AT an interview which I had yesterday with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, his Highness informed me that General Skobeleff, after going to Krasnovodsk, as reported in my despatch of the 17th instant, had abandoned his intention of proceeding to St. Petersburgh, and had returned to Chekishler.

No. 14.

Mr. Plunkett to Earl Granville.—(Received October 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 10, 1880.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the "Novoe Vremyia" states that 25 versts of the Trans-Caspian railroad will shortly be ready. The supply of water found along the line is said to be in excess of what was originally expected.

The whole line will extend over a distance of 200 versts, and the sum of 7,500,000 roubles has been assigned by the War Ministry for its construction.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. PLUNKETT.

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* Substance telegraphed.

No. 15.

Mr. Plunkett to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 18, 1880.

ACCORDING to a telegram from Krasnovodsk, dated the $\frac{4}{16}$th instant, the construction of the tramway along the broad gauge permanent way of the Trans-Caspian railway has been completed as far as Bahalshnira, a distance of 41 versts. The whole distance now completed is 59 versts. Regular traffic is opened along the line, and transports are being sent forward to their destination.

The section of the line leading from Michaeloff Bay for a distance of 28 versts was put to a severe test on the 12th or 13th instant. A severe storm sprung up, and it was feared that the line would be buried in the sand; but actually, however, the only inconvenience experienced was a suspension of the traffic for three hours.

The telegram further states that cold weather has set in, to the discomfort of the troops living in Calmuck kibitkas. A number of iron stoves have been distributed among the troops.

It is stated in the Russian newspapers, as has already been reported in my despatch No. 463 of the 11th ultimo, that a credit of 7,000,000 roubles has been opened for the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. PLUNKETT.

No. 16.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 19, 1880.

I HAVE the honour to report that General Skobeleff has commenced a decisive forward movement against the Téké Turkomans. Bami is mentioned as the place where a large depôt has been formed, and where a quantity of provisions has been collected for the use of the troops. The Red Cross Society is dispatching to the probable scene of operations a fresh batch of Sisters of Mercy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 17.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 22, 1880.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 19th instant, I have the honour to state that I am informed that General Skobeleff reported, under date Kelat, the 11th December (N.S.), that, on the 9th instant, Colonel Mavrotsky, commanding a cavalry detachment which was advancing along the upper course of the Sumbar River, had stormed the fortified Téké position of Karyzi Kelat, and had, in spite of a determined resistance, completely routed the enemy. Several thousand heads of cattle and a quantity of arms were captured by the Russians. The women and children taken prisoners were given into the custody of the Nukhurts. General Skobeleff further reports that he has received trustworthy intelligence to the effect that several thousand Merv Tékés are advancing, with artillery, to assist the Akhal Tékés.

This report of General Skobeleff was telegraphed from Bami, the furthest point of the field telegraph communication.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 18.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 3, 1881.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, December* 30, 1880.

ON the 14th instant General Skobeleff started from Bami with 4,500 infantry and six batteries. On the same day he sent forward the cavalry belonging to his force to push on as quickly as possible and threaten the Turkoman retreat from Geuk-Tépé. The cavalry force consisted of four squadrons of Dragoons and a considerable number of Cossacks.

Two days later General Ernestoff followed with 5,000 infantry.

On the 18th instant General Annenkoff left Bami with 4,000 infantry.

No. 19.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 11.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, January* 6, 1881.

FOR some days past a strong rumour has been current in St. Petersburgh that General Skobeleff has met with a reverse near Geuk-Tépé.

I have questioned M. de Giers and others upon the point, but the Russian authorities will only admit that General Skobeleff ordered a reconnaissance for the purpose of feeling the enemy, and they maintain that no serious engagement has taken place, and that certainly no losses worthy of mention have been sustained.

It is certainly true, as I have already had the honour of reporting to your Lordship by telegraph, that General Kouropatkine has also arrived in the neighbourhood of Geuk-Tépé with a detachment from General Kaufmann's army. M. de Giers describes the force accompanying General Kouropatkine as a battalion, or a very small column.

In a conversation with Colonel Villiers, General Miliutine stated that though some troops had been concentrated during the summer on the southern frontier of Russian Turkestan, with the view of distracting the attention of the Tékés, there never has been a question of dispatching a force from the north to co-operate with General Skobeleff. Probably, therefore, General Kouropatkine has merely conducted a tentative expedition organized for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of attacking the hostile Turkomans from a northern base.

No. 20.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 10, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that His Majesty the Emperor, at a military parade held yesterday afternoon, caused a telegram to the following effect from the Grand Duke Michel to be read to the assembled staff:—

"That on the 21st December (Russian style) General Skobeleff attacked the advanced Turkoman position in front of Geuk-Tépé, and carried it after severe fighting. On the following day the Turkomans made a sortie in great force, and endeavoured to retake the ground lost, but failed. The Russian losses were five on first day's fighting, ten on second. General Skobeleff adds that he will at once begin the bombardment of the main Turkoman position previous to delivering an assault."

I have, &c.

(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 21.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 18.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, January* 14, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the following telegram appeared in the "Invalide Russe" of this morning:—

Telegram received from the Grand Duke Michael, dated the 30th December, 1880 / 11th January, 1881:—

"I have only this day received a Report from Skobeleff, which is dated 23rd December, 1880 / 4th January, 1881. On that day at daybreak the first parallel, 800 paces from the principal outwork of Geuk-Tépé, was opened. The contest was obstinate and sanguinary. Its successful termination cost us, unfortunately, killed: General Petrusévitch, Major Bulygin, of the Tver Dragoons, the Cossack officer Ivanoff, and nineteen rank and file. Wounded: Lieutenant-Colonel Gojoberidzi, Sotnik Aleknikoff, and fifty-five rank and file. The enemy reinforced by 5,000 men from Merv. They fight with great determination. On our right flank, when General Petrusévitch was killed, the Tékés left over 300 bodies on the ground. Our troops are conducting themselves excellently, and Skobeleff cannot sufficiently praise their daring. It is intended between the 24th and 28th (Russian style) to strengthen and reinforce the first parallel. The death of General Petrusévitch is a severe and almost irreparable loss. He was the prized and constant adviser of Skobeleff."

No. 22.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 15, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation of an article that appeared in the "Invalide Russe" of the 1st / 13th January respecting the movements of General Skobeleff.

I have, &c.

(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 22.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of January $\frac{1}{13}$, 1881.

(Translation.)

DURING the course of several years measures have been taken to tranquillize the Trans-Caspian region, and to put an end to the raids committed by hostile Turkomans, as also to secure the trade route between Krasnovodsk and Khiva.

The expedition undertaken with this view against the Akhal Téké tribe in 1879 failed to attain the object in view. The Russian detachment unexpectedly encountered a numerous body of Tékés, strongly entrenched at Geuk-Tépé (situated 387 versts from the shores of the Caspian, in the centre of the Téké oasis), and was obliged to retire, owing to the want of means of transport. The Russian force, however, retained possession of Duzolum as an advanced post in the Valley of the Sumbar River (a tributary of the Attrek).

In 1880 the Government determined to renew offensive operations against the Akhal Tékés, who had, in the meantime, strengthened their position at Geuk-Tépé and the surrounding villages. On the appointment of General Skobeleff in March month, the construction of a base of operation was commenced. The task presented extraordinary difficulties. It was necessary to collect 20,000 camels from distant places, to organize a regular transport service by sea, and construct a harbour in Michael's Bay, from whence was commenced the continuation of a railroad in the direction of Kizil Arvat.

This work occupied the summer and part of the autumn. Meantime, towards the end of May, a small detachment was formed, which, advancing from Duzolum, occupied Hodjam-Kala on the 29th May (o. s.), and on the 10th June (o. s.) captured the port of Bami, situated between Krasnovodsk and Geuk-Tépé. This enabled the Russians to take measures for the opening of new lines of communication from Michael's Bay to

Kizil Arvat and Bami. To this advanced point supplies were sent forward from Tchikishlar, and subsequently from Michael's Bay.

On the $\frac{1st}{15th}$ July General Skobeleff, at the head of the advanced detachment, made a reconnaissance in the direction of Geuk-Tépé. On the $\frac{6}{18}$th July the detachment approached the fortification of Geuk-Tépé, and, notwithstanding the considerable body of Tékés which it encountered, succeeded in attaining the object in view. On the $\frac{10th}{22nd}$ July the detachment returned to Bami, having traversed a distance of 230 versts in ten days.

Between the months of May and December the Tékés made frequent attacks on the Russian transports and patrols. Thus, on the 21st June (o. s.) 300 Tékés attacked a party of 12 Cossacks, who heroically defended themselves during eight hours, until they were reinforced by a company of infantry. In this engagement Doctor Studitsky and 2 Cossacks were killed, and 5 Cossacks wounded. During the early part of August the Turkomans made repeated attacks along the line between Bami and Duzolum, but were successfully repulsed on each occasion. Attacks were simultaneously directed against the Michael line of communication near the Aidin Wells.

On the $\frac{11th}{23rd}$ September, a sotnia of the Taman regiment of Cossacks had a successful encounter with the enemy at the Wells of Kara-Singir, during which two Cossacks were wounded. During the night of the $\frac{14}{26}$th September unsuccessfully attacked Bendesen and Hodjam-Kala. The same date the port of Kasanchik was attacked, the Russian loss being two soldiers wounded. On the 22nd and 23rd October (o. s.) a body of Téké infantry attacked the Russian line from Bami to Bendesen. The Russian loss was one man killed and two wounded.

During the night of the 27th November (o. s.) a column of cavalry, under the command of Colonel Navrotsky, carried Kazyr-i-Khelat by storm, inflicting great loss on the Tékés.

On the $\frac{11th}{23rd}$ December, near the port of Kasanchik, a Téké force of 1,000 men attacked a Russian transport of 2,000 camels which was being conveyed by half a company of the Ansheron regiment. The Turkomans nearly succeeded in driving off the camels, but half a sotnia of Cossacks pushed forward from Kasanchik, and having overtaken the enemy at a distance of 15 versts, routed the Tékés and recaptured the camels. In this engagement the Russians lost 25 killed and 11 wounded.

In the early part of December the Russian troops occupied Artchman, Durun, Keliat, and Egian-Batyr-Kala: all these points were fortified and provisioned. On the $\frac{4}{16}$th December General Skobeleff with a small force made a second reconnaissance in the direction of Geuk-Tépé. The Russians obtained their object; their loss was 4 killed and 31 wounded, including 4 officers.

On the $\frac{8}{20}$th December Colonel Kuropatkine arrived at Bami with a small force of Turkestan troops. This force had traversed a distance of 400 versts in 18 days, over a sandy desert, starting from the lower course of the Amu-daria, and proceeding by way of Artaka, Igdy, and Kizil Arvat. During the whole of the march only two men fell ill.

On the $\frac{12}{24}$th December a third reconnaissance towards Geuk-Tépé was undertaken. The Tékés, numbering about 20,000 men, met the Russian force about 6 versts from the above fort. All the attacks of the enemy were repulsed by artillery fire and by volleys. Doctor Malshefsky was severely wounded in this affair; 1 soldier killed and 3 wounded.

This reconnaissance indicated the points of attack.

On the 20th December (o. s.) it was decided to storm Jangi-Kala, a fortified post situated 950 fathoms south of Geuk-Tépé. The attack was made by two columns from the north, under the command of Colonel Kozelkoff (and which was composed of 8 companies, 2 sotnias, 10 guns, and 2 rocket batteries), and from the south by a column of a similar strength under Colonel Kuropatkine; the main body was under the command of General Skobeleff, and was composed of 18½ companies, 7 squadrons and sotnias, and 32 guns. This force proceeded to the left of Colonel Kuropatkine's column. The enemy prepared to defend the south part of Jangi-Kala by *posse* filled with water, but being attacked by Colonel Kuropatkine's column in the rear, and by Colonel Kozelkoff in the flank and partly in the rear, fled, and was exposed to the fire of the whole of the artillery of the main body, being also attacked by two sotnias of Cossacks under the command of Count Orloff Denisoff. On the occupation of Gangi-Kala by the Russian force, the enemy's infantry, in large numbers from Geuk-Tépé, made two attempts to retake the position, but were each time repulsed by the infantry and artillery fire.

A fresh attempt on the part of the Tékés during the night of the 22nd December (o. s.) was also unsuccessful. The Russian loss was 1 soldier killed and 10 wounded. Colonel Kozelkoff slightly wounded.

A reconnaissance of the eastern and northern fronts of Geuk-Tépé, undertaken on the 21st December (o. s.) by General Petrusevitch, with a cavalry column of six sotnias and a mounted battery, drew out a considerable force of Téké infantry and cavalry: a spirited engagement ensued, which compelled General Skobeleff to bring up a force of 4 companies, 1 sotnia, and a battery. The charges of the Téké cavalry were so desperate, that several of their men were shot down at 10 paces from the Russian front. The Russian casualties on that day were 1 soldier killed and 5 wounded. The loss of the Tékés on both days was very considerable.

The Russian force has thus occupied a position quite close to Geuk-Tépé, and commands in the rear of the enemy the road to Askhabad. The considerable force of the Tékés and their strongly entrenched position will, in all probability, render it necessary to lay siege to the place, in order to avoid the losses which an open attack would entail.

No. 23.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received January 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 18, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose (in translation from the "Invalide Russe") copy of a telegram addressed to His Majesty by the Grand Duke Michael Nicolaivitch, dated Tiflis, $\frac{3rd}{15th}$ January, giving details of the severe fighting before Geuk-Tépé on the $\frac{28th \text{ and } 29th \text{ December}}{9th \text{ and } 10th \text{ January}}$ last.

The Tékés appear to have made a sortie in force, and to have temporarily occupied part of the Russian position, capturing several guns and mortars.

These, with one exception, were afterwards retaken, and the Russians on the evening of the $\frac{29th \text{ December}}{10th \text{ January}}$ took by assault the enemy's outworks.

General Skobeleff reports the firing as still continuing on the following day (the date on which his telegram was dispatched).

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of January $\frac{6}{18}$, 1881.

"L'INVALIDE RUSSE" publie, en supplément extraordinaire, la copie suivante d'un télégramme reçu par Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Son Altesse Impériale Mgr. le Grand-Duc, Commandant-en-chef des troupes du Caucase:—

"*Tiflis*, 3 *Janvier*, 1881.

"L'Aide-de-camp Général Skobélew annonce à la date du 30 Décembre que le 28, à 6 heures du soir, l'ennemi, fort de 30,000 fantassins, a fait de Ghéok-Tépé une sortie contre nos tranchées en cours d'exécution, occupées et gardées par dix-neuf compagnies, un détachement de volontaires et 100 Cosaques à pied, avec vingt et un canons et trois mortiers. Total 2,600 hommes et vingt-quatre pièces d'artillerie. Malgré tous les efforts de nos vaillantes troupes, les Tékés réussirent un moment à s'emparer de la partie la plus avancée de nos ouvrages et d'une partie de la seconde parallèle, ainsi que de quatre pièces de montagne et des trois mortiers, mais, accueillis par un feu bien nourri partant de la première parallèle et attaquées avec un grand élan par les réserves, ils furent délogés de toutes les positions qui étaient tombées entre leurs mains et se virent obligés d'abandonner l'artillerie dont ils s'étaient emparés, à l'exception d'une pièce de montagne, que l'ennemi a pu emporter dans sa retraite précipitée.

"Dans cette attaque, aussi furieuse qu'imprévue, nos troupes d'avant-garde ont subi des pertes considérables. Une compagnie du régiment d'Apscheron a été surtout éprouvée. Composée de soixante et dix hommes, elle a eu trente-deux tués et dix blessés. Le Commandant du bataillon, Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Mogalow, le Chef de compagnie, Sous-Lieutenant Tchinarew, et le Sous-Lieutenant Gotto, sont restés

sur le terrain. Les servants des pièces prises un moment par l'ennemi ont été sabrés, mais les pertes des Tékés sont incomparablement plus fortes. Les cadavres des leurs encombraient nos tranchées et couvraient tout le champ de bataille.

"Simultanément avec cette sortie, l'ennemi fit une vigoureuse charge de cavalerie contre notre camp, mais fut repoussé.

"Immédiatement après la défaite des Tékés qui avaient pris part à la sortie, nos troupes reçurent l'ordre de s'avancer sous l'abri des tranchées jusqu'à la troisième parallèle. S'étant aperçu de nos travaux, l'ennemi renouvela son attaque contre tout notre front, en faisant sortir toutes ses forces disponibles; mais, accueilli presque à bout portant par une fusillade meurtrière, dirigée contre lui de la seconde parallèle, il fut rejeté dans la forteresse, avec des pertes énormes.

"Les travaux ont continué et ont été terminés le 29 au matin, conformément au plan primitif.

"Le 29 Décembre, jusqu'à 3 heures après-midi, nos troupes ont bombardé à outrance la forteresse et les ouvrages avancés de la face est, situés à cinquante pas des retranchements principaux. A 3 heures les troupes marchèrent à l'assaut et, après une lutte acharnée, s'emparèrent définitivement, vers 6 heures du soir, des ouvrages avancés ennemis, en s'y fortifiant solidement.

"Le 30 Décembre le siège a continué.

"Nos pertes dans les combats du 28 et du 29 Décembre sont de 7 officiers* et 102 soldats tués, 9 officiers† et 84 soldats blessés. Nous avons eu en outre 8 employés du service sanitaire tués ou blessés.

"Dans la nuit du 28 au 29 Décembre s'est distingué tout particulièrement le Commandant de la 3e batterie de siège, Capitaine en Second Balouïew, qui, tourné par l'ennemi, n'en a pas moins continué de tirer à mitraille, avec les seuls servants de ses pièces, et a réussi à sauver sa batterie.

"Une vive fusillade continue le 30 Décembre.

"Les troupes se conduisent d'une manière héroïque. Tout le personnel de la Croix-Rouge s'est distingué d'une manière hors ligne. Il a rendu des services inappréciables dans la nuit du 28 au 29 Décembre."

No. 24.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 20, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation of a telegram published by the "Invalide Russe" of yesterday, giving details of the severe fighting which took place before Geuk-Tépé on the 30th December / 11th January. General Skobeleff admits a loss during the night of 1 officer and 52 men killed, and 5 officers and 95 men wounded.

(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 24.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of January 17, 1881.

"L'INVALIDE RUSSE" publie aujourd'hui en supplément extraordinaire le télégramme suivant de Son Altesse Impériale Mgr. le Grand-Duc, Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase, à Sa Majesté l'Empereur:—

"*Tiflis*, 5 *Janvier*.

"L'Aide-de-camp Général Skobéleff annonce à la date du 1er Janvier que le soir du 30 Décembre, vers 8 heures et demie, l'ennemi a attaqué en masses compactes nos travaux de siège, à Ghéok-Tépé. L'attaque a eu lieu simultanément de front et par le flanc gauche, et se trouvait compliquée d'une attaque de notre camp, pris à revers et par le flanc droit. Un combat acharné, dégénérant par endroits en lutte corps à corps, dura jusqu'à minuit et demi. Les Tékés furent repoussés du camp ainsi que du flanc droit et du front des travaux de siège. Sur le flanc gauche de ces

* Outre les officiers déjà nommés, ont été tués: le Lieutenant-Colonel Mamatsew, les Lieutenants Sandetsky et Niélépow et le Chirurgien-Major Troïtsky.

† Le Lieutenant-Colonel Bilde, le Prince Galitsyne, Aide-de-camp de Sa Majesté l'Empereur, le Capitaine de corvette "Zoubow," le Capitaine du Génie "Yablotchkow," le Capitaine en Second Batrosch, les Lieutenants Gronnikow et Podgoublitsky, le Lieutenant de Cosaques Assier, et le Sous-Lieutenant Voïnow.

travaux ils réussirent à s'emparer momentanément d'une redoute occupée par une compagnie du bataillon sédentaire Transcaspien, et armée de deux pièces de montagne, après avoir tué tous les servants des pièces, infligé à la compagnie des pertes s'élevant à quarante tués (le Commandant de la compagnie et trente-neuf soldats), et quarante et un blessés. Les réserves, accourues à temps, reprirent la redoute et l'une des pièces de montagne, tandis que l'autre fut emmenée par l'ennemi, malgré la poursuite qu'il eut à subir en se repliant, avec des pertes considérables, et qui dura jusqu'au pied de la forteresse. Nos artilleurs, avant de mourir en héros, avaient eu le temps d'enlever le mécanisme de la culasse du canon perdu, et ce mécanisme a été retrouvé dans la redoute reprise par nos troupes.

"Les travaux de siège qui devaient être effectués la nuit du 30 au 31 Décembre n'en ont pas moins été terminés.

"Après la retraite de l'ennemi, la forteresse a été bombardée à outrance, et son intérieur battu pendant toute la nuit par des décharges plongeantes. Le lendemain notre camp a été avancé jusqu'à la première parallèle.

"Nos pertes dans cette nuit ont été les suivantes :—Le Lieutenant Ivanovsky a été tué. Le Capitaine Cosaque Noudjevsky, le Capitaine en Second Balouïew, le Capitaine en Second Kharkévitch, le Sous-Lieutenant Grinew, et l'Enseigne Vagalow sont blessés. Nous avons eu en outre cinquante-deux soldats tués et quatre-vingt-seize blessés. Les pertes de l'ennemi sont très considérables. Le siège continue."

No. 25.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received January 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, January 26, 1881.*

INFORMATION has been received by the Russian Minister that Geuk-Tépé, after severe fighting and heavy loss on both sides, was taken by assault the day before yesterday.

No. 26.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received January 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, January 26, 1881.*

GENERAL SKOBELEFF has taken Geuk-Tépé. Russian loss, 500. No officer of distinction has fallen. Turkomans pursued 15 versts.

No. 27.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received January 31.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, January 24, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that on the 16th instant General Skobeleff reports that he was within 45 yards of Geuk-Tépé. The entire Turkoman force joined in a sortie, attacking the Russian front and left flank. They were eventually repulsed and pursued to the walls of the fort.

The head of the sap is within 39 paces from the walls.

General Skobeleff states that the Russian loss on the 16th amounted to 1 officer and 12 men killed, 3 officers and 78 men wounded; on the 17th 4 men killed, 1 officer and 17 men wounded. The General states that the service in the trenches is very severe, as the enemy's force is ten times greater than his own.

No. 28.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 31.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, January* 26, 1881.

I INFORMED your Lordship this day by telegraph of the capture of Geuk-Tépé and Dengal-Tépé by General Skobeleff.

In announcing the news to me this afternoon, M. de Giers observed that, now that this great victory had been gained, and the power of the Téké Turkomans signally broken, the time had come for the Russian Government to show its moderation, and to take care not to allow itself to be entangled in further military operations in that quarter of the world.

I asked his Excellency whether I might repeat this observation to your Lordship. His Excellency replied that I might do so as his personal opinion; but the news having only just arrived, he had seen nobody, and of course was not in a position to make any official declaration as to the course which the Russian Government might subsequently pursue.

I have little doubt, however, that, as far as the official world of St. Petersburgh is concerned, from the Emperor downwards, there is a desire to circumscribe General Skobeleff's military operations, and that the Minister of War himself is disposed to acquiesce in a pacific line of conduct.

A very significant protest against military expenditure was introduced into M. Abaza's budget memorandum; and I am convinced that the influence of the Minister of Finance, as well as that of M. de Giers, will be exercised in favour of a moderate policy.

The course of events, however, is very much in General Skobeleff's hands; for a Commander-in-chief, at so great a distance from the seat of government, is always in a position to prove that military considerations have necessitated whatever line of conduct he may choose to adopt. A great deal must also depend on the attitude assumed by the defeated Turkomans. But, making every allowance for these uncertain contingencies, I am disposed to think that the circuit of Russian military operations in Turkestan will not be further extended.

No. 29.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 3.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 28, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th instant, I have the honour to inclose a translation of an article published in the "Golos," giving geographical details of the oasis of the Akhal Tékés.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Extract from the "Agence Générale Russe" of January $\frac{14}{26}$, 1881.

REVUE DE LA PRESSE RUSSE.—L'OASIS DES AKHALS-TÉKÉS.—L'intérêt qui s'attache à la lutte acharnée que nos braves mènent en ce moment dans la steppe Turcmène contre le principal repaire des Akhal-Tékés nous a engagé de reproduire ici, d'après le "Goloss," la description et la carte de cette oasis encore fort peu connue. Nous ne répondons pas, par cela même, de leur parfaite exactitude. Telles qu'elles sont, et faites d'après les nouvelles indications introduites dans la carte de la contrée trans-Caspienne (20 verstes par pouce) du dépôt de la guerre, elles peuvent néanmoins donner une idée approximative du théâtre de la lutte:—

"La route qui se dirige de Bama à Askhabade et Merv suit une courbe presque parallèle au Kopetdag, ligne de montagnes qui s'étend le long de la frontière Persane. A 120 kilom. environ de Bama cette route est entrecoupée par le ruisseau, dit Sékazéïabe, qui descend de la crête du Kopetdag; à cette intersection se trouve Denglitépé, l'un des cantonnements permanents des Tékés, dont un autre, à

2 kilom. environ plus au nord, est Ghéok-Tépé, tandis qu'une troisième, appelé Yanghikala, se trouve à même distance au sud du premier. Toute cette localité porte le nom général de Ghéok-Tépé. Le Général Lomakhine a en réalité attaqué Denglitépé et le Général Skobélev, après s'être emparé tout d'abord de Yanghikala, assiège actuellement Denglitépé. Quant au cantonnement proprement dit de Ghéok-Tépé aucune attaque n'a été et n'est encore dirigée contre lui. Il est à supposer que la principale concentration des Tékés est précisément à Denglitépé et que Ghéok-Tépé et Yanghikala ne sont, pour ainsi dire, que des points d'appui fortifiées. Or, comme chacun de ces cantonnements fortifiés est entouré de champs ensemencés, au milieu desquels se trouve toujours, selon l'usage de ces tribus, des espèces de forts détachés, dits 'kalys,' il est à supposer que les forts avancés dont nos troupes se sont emparés sont précisément des 'kalys' de ce genre. A l'attaque d'ailleurs entreprise par le Général Lomakhine contre Denglitépé nos troupes se heurtèrent à l'extrémité sud-ouest contre de hautes murailles, entourées d'un fossé d'environ deux toises. Quoiqu'il en soit, Yanglikala, Denglitépé et Ghéok-Tépé forment, sur le même cours d'eau, la ligne de défense ennemie appelée Ghéok-Tépé, au delà de laquelle commence la partie la plus habitée de l'oasis des Akhal-Tékés. Le fort ou la fortification de Samour se trouve plus à l'ouest, à cheval également sur la route de Bama-Askhabade, et près de Bama. On voit donc qu'en commençant son mouvement offensif de ce dernier point, le Général Skobélev a tourné la ligne défensive de l'ennemi du côté gauche. La première parallèle au sud de Denglitépé a été pratiquée au nord de Yanghikala, à l'est du cours d'eau et conséquemment à droite de la route d'Askhabade. Par cette position nous commandons notre ligne de retraite et la route d'Askhabade que doit suivre l'ennemi, soit pour se replier sur Merv, soit pour en recevoir des renforts, ainsi que les communications du nord. Il est assez probable qu'à l'heure qu'il est ce soit dans cette direction, c'est-à-dire, vers Ghéok-Tépé proprement dit, que les Tékés ont dirigé leurs familles. Lorsque les renforts lui seront arrivés, il est à présumer que le Général Skobélev pourra investir la ligne de défense de l'ennemi également du côté de l'ouest, et prendre ainsi par le flanc les Tékés qui défendent Denglitépé et tirent sur Ghéok-Tépé. Il est impossible en effet que, sachant par nos premières rencontres avec les Tékés combien ils étaient en nombre et forts, nous n'ayons pas massé des réserves tant entre Bama et la Mer Caspienne que sur les bords Caucasiens de celle-ci."

No. 30.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 4, 1881.

GENERAL SKOBELEFF'S cavalry have advanced 10 miles beyond Askabat.

No. 31.

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

My Lord, *Foreign Office, February* 8, 1881.

IN the course of conversation yesterday afternoon the Russian Ambassador showed me a despatch from his Government written in April last, but which he said he had not shown at the time either to Lord Salisbury or to me, which contained some observations as to the scope and objects of the expedition against the Turkomans. The despatch stated that, in the opinion of the Russian Government, the importance of Merv had been much exaggerated; that they could not pledge themselves as to the exact limits within which their military operations would be confined; that they had no desire to push them as far as Merv, but if they found themselves compelled to do so they certainly did not contemplate a permanent occupation, and would withdraw as soon as possible.

Prince Lobanow explained that it had been left to him to communicate the contents of this despatch or not, as he thought fit, and that he had seen no advantage at the time in doing so.

I said that I noted that this despatch was written nearly twelve months ago. Otherwise it would have struck me that the information given in it did not go so far as

what had been lately said by M. de Giers to your Excellency, namely: "That now that this great victory had been gained and the power of the Téké Turkomans signally broken, the time had come for the Russian Government to show its moderation, and to take care not to allow itself to be entangled in further military operations in that quarter of the world."

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 32.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, February 1, 1881.*

I HAVE had a few more words with M. de Giers relative to General Skobeleff's recent achievements, and a very interesting conversation with General Miliutine on the same subject.

M. de Giers again alluded to the desire and the determination of the Russian Government to finish off their expedition against the Akhal Tékés as rapidly as possible. He told me he had repeated to the Emperor the personal assurances he had already given me on this point, as reported in my despatch to your Lordship No. 30 of the 26th ultimo; and that His Majesty had expressed his entire approval of what he had said.

Having, however, learned that a telegram had arrived from General Skobeleff announcing his intention of proceeding at once to Askhabat, I called upon General Miliutine with the view of ascertaining what language he was disposed to hold in reference to General Skobeleff's future programme. His Excellency was very frank and very positive. He told me that the slaughter of the Téké Turkomans had been enormous, whereas the Russians had only had 50 men killed. The dead bodies of no fewer than 4,000 Turkomans had been found within the enceinte of Geuk-Tépé. This is exclusive of those who had fallen in the previous combats, as well as of those who were cut up during the pursuit, which, as your Lordship is aware, was prolonged for 10 miles beyond the stronghold.

General Miliutine also informed me that the women and children of the principal Chiefs of the Turkoman tribes had been found by General Skobeleff within the fortress, and that this circumstance would probably facilitate the speedy and permanent settlement of this district, and that deputations had already arrived from certain Téké Chiefs beseeching permission to return to their homes.

I then alluded to the reported forward movement of General Skobeleff upon Askhabat. General Miliutine certainly did not deny the possibility of a march in that direction, but he gave me to understand that, as they had not yet received any details of the recent incidents of General Skobeleff's campaign, it was impossible for the Russian Government as yet to appreciate the requirements of the situation; but he could assure me, he added in the most positive manner, that although, after having made so great an effort, it would be necessary for Russia to arrive at such a conclusive arrangement with the Turkomans as would guarantee their future good behaviour, and secure the tranquillity of the district, nothing more was desired by Russia than the termination of the campaign; that, in any event, operations would be confined to the subjugation of the Akhal Téké oasis, and that there could not be a question of an expedition across the deserts which separated the Akhal districts from Merv. If Merv were to be attacked, his Excellency observed, it would be better to advance upon it from the north rather than from the west.

As I have already stated in a previous despatch, the future movements of the Russian army in the Turkoman country are more in the hands of General Skobeleff than in those of the Government at St. Petersburgh; but, though it is possible that he may be able to advance to Askhabat, I doubt whether he has at present the means of proceeding much further into the interior of the country.

No. 33.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 31, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose extracts from the Russian press referring to the capture by General Skobeleff of Geuk-Tépé.

I also beg to inclose a translation of a notice published in the "Invalide Russe," giving the official return of the Russians killed and wounded during the assault of the Turkoman stronghold.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 33.

Extracts from the Russian Press.

THE Russian newspapers of the $\frac{1}{2}\frac{5}{7}$th January contain leading articles on the capture of Geuk-Tépé. The following extracts are taken from the principal organs of the Russian press.

The "Golos" says:—

"The Russian standard waving above the walls of Geuk-Tépé, after a hotly-contested struggle, must serve as a symbol of peace and tranquillity to the inhabitants of the Akhal Téké oasis, and who, after their struggle for life and death, deserve to be respected. . . . . Russian prestige, which was shaken by last year's expedition, is now re-established. The Téké Turkomans, who considered themselves invincible, and sole masters of the Aral and Caspian steppes, have been conquered. Under these circumstances, the object with which the expedition was started, *i.e.*, to insure the security of our caravan routes. Consequently, it remains to be hoped that there will be no necessity for Russia to undertake new expeditions in that part of Central Asia. Enough life and enough substance has been sacrificed."

The "Novoe Vremya" considers that it is not the time to raise the question whether the expedition was worth the lives and money that have been expended upon it. The article speaks in loud terms of the heroic behaviour of the Russian soldier and his talented leader, Skobeleff, and at the same time renders due justice to the fighting qualities exhibited by the Tékés.

The "St. Petersburgh Vedomosti" is of opinion that the Tékés have suffered a crushing defeat, the effect of which will be felt throughout the whole Turkoman oasis, whose savage inhabitants must now bow to Russia's strength and authority. The terrible privations which the Russian soldiers undergo, and the almost insurmountable difficulties they encounter in these expeditions, are successfully overcome by the consciousness of the task which they have undertaken, and by their faith in the sacred mission of the nation. The interest felt throughout Russia, when the question arises of conquest in Asia, is remarkable. No idea of a compromise or a retreat is admitted. The Russian nation instinctively believes that the East belongs to it, and its sons are ready to maintain their right by sacrificing their lives. The Russian Empire in Asia ends where Russian dialects are not heard. It is not a question of numbers, but of historical right.

The "Molva" expresses a hope that with the capture of Geuk-Tépé and Dengil-Tépé, military operations in that region will be brought to a close, and that further conquests in that direction will be effected by other means than force of arms.

St. Petersburgh, January $\frac{1}{2}\frac{5}{7}$, 1881.

Inclosure 2 in No. 33.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of January $\frac{18}{30}$, 1881.

D'APRÈS une dépêche de l'Aide-de-camp Général Skobelew, de Ghéok-Tépé, le 13 Janvier, nos pertes, lors de l'assaut de la veille, ont été les suivantes :

Officiers tués, 4; savoir : les Capitaines Grek et Kounakovski, le Lieutenant Merkilhew et le Sous-Lieutenant Moritz. Officiers blessés, 18; savoir : les Lieutenants-Colonels Popow et Zeprinsky, l'Aide-de-camp de Sa Majesté, Comte Orlow-Denissow, les Capitaines Mitkévitch, Voltchansky, Gœtschel, les Capitaines en second Khorkévitch et Davydow, les Lieutenants Youreniew et Arkhatzky, les Sous-Lieutenants Popow, Degterow, et Mahométow, les Enseignes Ouschakow, Kascheriniow, Oussatchew, Dserdsievsky. et Andronikow. Officiers contusionnés, 10. En outre, le garde-marine Maior est blessé.

Le nombre des soldats et sous-officiers tués est de 50; celui des blessés de 235; et des contusionnés de 75.—"Invalide Russe."

No. 34.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, February 3, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship a translation of a telegram from General Skobeleff, which appeared in the "Invalide Russe" of yesterday.

Inclosure in No. 34.

Substance of Article in the "Invalide Russe" of $\frac{\text{January 21}}{\text{February 2}}$, 1881.

THE "Invalide Russe" of the $\frac{\text{21st January}}{\text{2nd February}}$ contains the following telegram from the Grand Duke Michael, dated Vladikavkas, $\frac{\text{19th}}{\text{31st}}$ January, 1881 :—

"Skobeleff telegraphed on the $\frac{16}{28}$th January the following particulars of the storming of Geuk-Tépé :—

"The 1st column was commanded by Colonel Kuropatkine, and consisted of 2 companies, 3 battalions, 3 Turkestan companies, $\frac{1}{2}$ company of sappers, 1 company of volunteers, 1 sotnia of Turkestan Cossacks, 1 mountain battery, and No. 6 battery of the 21st artillery brigade, 2 Gatling guns, 2 rocket batteries, and 1 heliograph; column No. 2 was under the command of Colonel Kozelkoff, and consisted of 2 battalions, a company of sappers, 1 company of naval volunteers, a part of No. 6 battery of the 21st artillery brigade, 1 Gatling gun, 2 rocket batteries, and 1 heliograph; the 3rd column, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Haidaroff, was formed of 1 battalion, a company of volunteers, No. 4 battery of the 19th artillery brigade, a company of sappers, 1 Gatling gun, 5 rocket batteries, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ sotnia of Cossacks; the 4th column comprised the reserves—21 companies and 24 guns. Colonel Haidaroff's column was directed against the enemy's works on the south side, and opened the attack at 7 P.M. meanwhile 36 guns commenced to make a breach for Colonel Kozelkoff's column, preparations for which had been made on the $\frac{8}{30}$th, and which was finally effected by the firing of mines charged with dynamite and pyrokselin, these mines having been laid at the base of the enemy's walls (on the south side) during the previous night. At 11·20 A.M. Colonel Haidaroff stormed the enemy's outwork, and occupied it with his force. At 11.20 a mine, containing 125 poods of powder, was fired under the ramparts on the east side, burying in the ruins several hundred of the Tékés. The explosion of the mine was the signal for the attack of Colonels Kuropatkine's and Kozelkoff's columns. Both ramparts were occupied in the space of ten minutes. A sanguinary hand-to-hand encounter ensued, the enemy stubbornly keeping their ground on the walls. The fight on the ramparts continued for about an hour; 2 battalions and 4 companies of the reserves were moved forward. One battalion stormed that part of the enemy's wall between the two breaches, which remained standing, by means of ladders. All the Tékés on the ramparts were killed after a desperate resistance. At 1·30 Lieutenant-Colonel Haidaroff's column scaled the south-eastern wall of the fort. Fighting commenced in the interior of the fort. At 2 P.M. we occupied the commanding redoubt of Dengil Tépé, and became complete masters of the fort. The

enemy fled, leaving the camp, their stores, and families. One division of dragoons, 4 sotnias of Cossacks, 6 companies of infantry, 4 long-range guns and a mountain battery, pursued the Tékés and cut them down for a distance of 15 versts.

"Inside the fort we counted over 4,000 dead bodies, and this number does not include the slain which almost fill the moats and the masses sabred by the cavalry during the pursuit. Judging from the fresh graves and the information obtained, the total loss of the enemy during the siege and in the sorties is very great. We found a large number of guns, including our own Berdan rifles, a number of field-pieces with projectiles, several flags, kibitkas, stores of flour, forage, 4,000 families, including the families of 3 Imams, and, moreover, 700 Persian prisoners.

"The Russian loss between the 20th December and 12th January (o. s.) inclusive is reported as follows:—16 officers killed and 55 wounded (13 slightly). Rank and file, 267 killed and 770 wounded (123 slightly)."

Then follows a list of the officers and men who distinguished themselves during the siege and storm of Geuk-Tépé.

No. 35.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 11, 188 ..

A TELEGRAM from General Skobeleff, dated 8th February, states that he is *en route* for Bami with main column, leaving garrisons at Geuk-Tépé and Askhabad.

No. 36.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 14.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 9, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that according to a telegram from Tchikishlar of the $\frac{25\text{th January}}{6\text{th February}}$, 1881, published in the "Golos" of yesterday, it appears that the Trans-Caspian Railway has been extended to Akhtcha-Kouïma, the line being thus completed for a distance of 106 versts.

The correspondent adds that General Annenkoff, the chief constructor of the railway, will shortly return to St. Petersburgh on account of ill-health.

The St. Petersburgh correspondent of the "Moscow Gazette" reports to that paper that reinforcements have reached General Skobeleff's expeditionary corps, that a telegraph station is being established at Geuk-Tépé, and that the advance of the Russians beyond Geuk-Tépé continues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 37.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 14.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 10, 1881.

GENERAL SKOBELEFF has occupied Askhabad with a flying column, and Annan with a cavalry detachment. This last-named may be looked upon as the furthest point eastward of the Téké Turkoman country. Between Annan and Merv (180 miles) there is a considerable tract of desert.

The General has returned to Bami.

No. 38.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 14.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 10, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a précis of an article published in the "Golos" of the 24th January / 5th February on the occupation of Askhabad by a detachment of General Skobeleff's troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Extract from the "Golos" of January 24 / February 5, 1881.

THE "Golos" of the 24th January / 5th February, 1881, comments in a leading article on the intelligence received yesterday of the occupation of Askhabad by a detachment of General Skobeleff's troops.

The "Golos" considers that the occupation of Askhabad without any resistance shows that the victory of the $\frac{12}{24}$th was of a very decisive character, and that no apprehension of any serious opposition on the part of the Tékés need be felt any longer. Further, the article states that it was only by such an advance that the necessary impression could be produced on the minds of the population of the oasis. That such an impression has been produced is shown by the official statement that the population was tendering its submission to the Russian commander.

The article concludes as follows:—

"In what does the ultimate object of this expedition consist? The occupation of Askhabad without opposition does not prove that the contest is completely at an end, although it shows that the victory of the $\frac{12}{24}$th gained us positive strategical advantages.

"We must hope, however, that these advantages will not serve as the pretext for a further advance eastward. The fact that General Skobeleff was at Bami on the 22nd January / 3rd February, and not with the flying column, shows that he is taking measures for the consolidation of the success which has been gained."

No. 39.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 16, 1881.

TWELVE hundred Persian slaves taken from Turkomans have been released and handed over by General Skobeleff to the Persian Agent in his camp, and he has provided them with sufficient means to reach their homes.

This action will not fail to produce a strong and favourable impression throughout the country.

No. 40.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 21.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 14, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of a telegram sent by General Skobeleff from Askhabad on the 26th January / 7th February, stating the measures taken by the Russians since the fall of Geuk-Tépé.

The General adds that the health of the Russians is up to the present time satisfactory.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" du $\frac{2}{14}$ *Février*, 1881.

LE même journal publie le télégramme suivant du Général Skobélew, en date d'Askhabad, le 26 Janvier :

"A la suite de ma proclamation invitant les Tékés à regagner leurs foyers, la population quitte peu à peu les plaines de sable et dépose les armes. 7,000 familles sont déjà de retour. Sati-Khan, Khoudaï-Verdy-Khan, et autres notables du pays sont dans notre camp, et c'est grâce à cette circonstance que les autres reviennent. On a organisé une administration temporaire. Je prends des mesures pour que la population indigène réunie à Ghéok-Tépé puisse regagner ses anciennes demeures. On lui a distribué différents objets trouvés dans le camp ennemi: des chariots, des vivres, des vêtements, des ustensiles de cuisine, et on lui prodigue aussi des secours médicaux.

On prend en outre les mesures indispensables pour désinfecter Ghéok-Tépé et ses abords, afin de prévenir les conséquences désastreuses qui pourraient se produire au printemps. Il paraît que 7,400 cadavres ont été enterrés à Doighil-Tépé, et que pendant le siège 8,000 Tékés sont tombés. Je crois pouvoir affirmer que pendant la poursuite de l'ennemi il en a péri encore jusqu'à 2,000.

L'état sanitaire de nos troupes est satisfaisant jusqu'à présent."

No. 41.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 16, 1881.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 8th instant, mentioning the fact of Prince Lobanow's having communicated to you, some time after he had received it, the contents of a despatch containing an exposition of the policy of the Russian Government in Turkestan, it may be proper to observe that I consider the positive assurance given to me personally by the Emperor of Russia himself (as reported in my despatch of the 13th August, 1879,* and commented upon in my subsequent despatch of the 26th August of the same year),† to the effect that there was no intention on the part of Russia of advancing to Merv, as still extant and in full force, and as never having been since qualified or withdrawn by His Majesty himself or by any of his Ministers.

From time to time I have taken care to remind M. de Giers that this was the sense in which I continued to regard His Majesty's gracious communication.

I have, &c.

(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 42.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 21.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 16, 1881.

YESTERDAY M. de Giers informed me that he hoped matters were quieting down in Turkestan. He added that the Grand Duke Michael, who has recently returned to St. Petersburgh from the Caucasus, entertained the most moderate and peaceful views, and that he was quite at one with the Emperor and the Ministers in desiring to circumscribe the limits of General Skobeleff's operations.

No. 43.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 18, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an article from this morning's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," denying the truth of the news recently published by the "Daily News" to

* See "Central Asia No. 1 (1880)," No. 115. † Ibid., No. 117.

the effect that the Russians intend to attack Merv, and that General Skobeleff, in order to reach that stronghold, proposes to march through Persian territory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 43.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of February $\frac{6}{18}$, 1881.

LE télégraphe nous a transmis hier soir la dépêche suivante de Londres :—

"On mande de Khélat au "Daily News," sous la date du 2 Février :—

"Les Chefs de Merv ont tenu une délibération dans laquelle ils ont décidé d'opposer aux Russes la résistance la plus extrême. Toutes leurs forces seront concentrées de façon à empêcher la marche des troupes Russes sur Tejend, où Makdoumpouli Khan est arrivé avec 5,000 Tékés. Une trentaine d'Anciens des Turcomans de Merv sont partis pour Candahar afin d'y demander du secours. Le Général Skobélew a l'intention de traverser le territoire Persan. Le bruit court que les Turcomans essaient de faire dévier le fleuve à l'est vers Merv, afin de priver les Russes de l'approvisionnement d'eau."

C'est là une nouvelle à sensation, que le "Daily News" aura été bien aise de publier. Malheureusement pour son correspondant, à la distance où il se trouve du théâtre des opérations il ne peut avoir des renseignements authentiques. Il est l'écho plus ou moins conscient des bruits de bazars, et lorsqu'il parle des intentions du Général Skobélew, il puise ou dans sa propre imagination ou dans des rumeurs qu'il ne peut contrôler. Au lieu de songer à traverser le territoire Persan, le Général Skobélew revient—nous dit-on.

D'ailleurs, il n'a jamais été question d'aller jusqu'à Merv, et encore moins de traverser le territoire Persan. Et comme il est possible que le correspondant du "Daily News" montre du scepticisme lorsque nous lui dirons que le Gouvernement Russe entend respecter le territoire d'un Gouvernement voisin, avec lequel il est dans les termes les plus amicaux, nous opposerons à son assertion une considération plus terre à terre et devant laquelle il hésitera peut-être pas à s'incliner; c'est que nos troupes tirant une partie de leur approvisionnement du Khorassan il est de notre intérêt de ne pas froisser les susceptibilités Persanes. Ce qui enlève en outre de l'autorité aux assertions du correspondant Anglais, c'est qu'il a été victime de mésaventures qu'il s'est attirées par sa propre imprudence. Lorsqu'il s'installa à Mesched, la présence d'"un Anglais qu'on savait intéressé à connaître les faits et gestes des Tékés donna de l'ombrage aux autorités Persanes; celles-ci étaient instruites des menées du Capitaine Napier et du Major Butler, et un compatriote de ces officiers pouvait à bon droit paraître quelque peu suspect. Les autorités Persanes voulaient d'abord lui interdire le séjour de Mesched; si elles le lui permirent ensuite, ce fut sur les représentations du Ministre d'Angleterre à Téhéran et à condition qu'il ne franchirait pas la frontière. Le correspondant ne se conforma pas à cette clause; il essaya de quitter le territoire Persan, fut arrêté au moment où il violait les injonctions reçues et acceptées et à la suite de cela il dut abandonner la Perse. Il est tout naturel qu'il soit aigri et contre la Perse et contre la Russie, à laquelle il attribue peut-être, et à tort, son expulsion. Le ton de ses télégrammes s'en ressent et il est disposé à envoyer au "Daily News" des nouvelles de nature à exciter l'opinion publique. Si notre confrère Anglais ignore ces détails intimes, il sera sans doute bien aise de les apprendre par notre intermédiaire.

No. 44.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received February 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February 19, 1881.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 14th instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of a telegram, published in the "Invalide Russe" of yesterday, addressed by General Skobeleff to the Grand Duke Michael, from Bami, on the $\frac{4}{16}$th instant, giving further details of the proceedings of the Russian forces since the fall of Geuk-Tépé.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of February $\frac{7}{19}$, 1881.

LE "Messager Officiel" et "l'Invalide Russe" publient le télégrame que voici de l'Aide-de-camp Général Skobéleff à Son Altesse Impériale Mgr. le Grand-Duc, Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase.

"*Bhamy, 4 Février.*—Le détachement envoyé dans les déserts de sable sous les ordres du Colonel Kouropatkine a parcouru du 22 Janvier au 1er Février une distance considérable. La cavalerie a fait 380 verstes, l'infanterie 250, en franchissant pour la plupart du temps des collines de sables mouvants. La population nombreuse qui se groupait autour des puits a fait sa soumission complète en voyant arriver nos troupes, Elle s'est laissé désarmer et elle a accompagné le détachement dans son retour à l'oasis. 15,000 personnes des deux sexes sont revenues. On a levé les plans des routes parcourues et l'on a dressé une carte routière. L'œuvre de la pacification continue en général d'une manière satisfaisante. D'Askhabad à Ghéok-Tépé toute la population est rentrée dans ses foyers. Dans d'autres localités le mouvement de retour a commencé."

No. 45.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 2.)

Telegraphic.) *Tehran, March 2, 1881.*

I HEAR that General Skobeleff is still at Geuk-Tépé, and that he intends sending troops by Abi and the Atek of Deregez and Khelat to Tejen, where Akhal fugitives now are.

No. 46.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 11.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, March 11, 1881.*

I HAVE heard from Meshed that Atek of Deregez is occupied by Russian force of 2,000 cavalry, 2,000 infantry, and 6 guns, and that marks indicating occupation have been placed by the Russians in Atek of Kelat.

No. 47.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received March 14.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March 8, 1881.*

ON Friday last I had what at the time appeared to me a very important conversation with M. de Giers, but a subsequent interview has in a great measure neutralized its significance.

On the occasion referred to M. de Giers requested me to telegraph to your Lordship to contradict a report to which the "Times of India" had given currency, to the effect that the Russian authorities in Central Asia had come to an understanding with the Turkomans of Merv, and were about to occupy that locality. This statement, M. de Giers said, was a pure invention.

But his Excellency went on to mention that two Russian subjects had been recently murdered by the Merv Turkomans, that English intrigues at Merv itself had complicated the situation, and that it was becoming uncertain what would have to be done. In reply, I said I trusted these observations were not intended to pave the way for an announcement that General Skobeleff was about to march upon Merv, as such a communication would be in direct contradiction to all the assurances which, during the last two years, not only he himself, but the Emperor, had authorized me to transmit to the British Government.

M. de Giers remarked that those assurances merely consisted in the statement that the Russian Government, at the time they were given, had no intention of going to Merv.

I answered that, although the word "intention" was undoubtedly to be found in some of the phrases made use of, the general purport of my repeated conversations with himself and with General Miliutine amounted to a serious, *bonâ fide*, and unambiguous declaration on the part of the Russian Government that Merv was not to be attacked. Moreover, I added, when the Emperor deigned on two occasions to give me similar assurances, His Majesty made use of the most unequivocal language, and an intimation of this kind, proceeding from so august a source, possessed a direct and abiding force which of necessity endured until it was formally retracted. Fortified by these considerations, and impressed by the sincerity and earnestness of his Excellency's repeated asseverations upon this point, I had led my Government to consider the matter as having been placed beyond doubt, and I hardly saw in what language I could convey to your Lordship any intimation to a contrary effect. At all events, if the announcements which had been so frequently made to me, and which I had been requested to repeat to London, were to be annulled, I should expect the fact to be conveyed to me, not by hints and doubtful innuendoes, but in terms absolutely clear and explicit.

On this his Excellency re-asserted his anxious desire to make the Russian policy in Central Asia conform to the programme he had described to me as the one which recommended itself to his own judgment.

Two days later I learned from my French colleague, General Chanzy, that a certain hesitancy in relation to the immediate termination of the Central Asian campaign had suddenly supervened in the minds of some of the Emperor's military advisers, but that this phase of things had again given place to more prudent counsels; and that he had that morning announced to his Government that the Emperor had arrived at a definite decision to forbid the further extension of operations in Central Asia, and that orders in that sense were to be sent to General Skobeleff. "Not only," said the French Ambassador, "are those around the Emperor fully convinced of the necessity of economy and peace, but it is felt that in the present uncertain state of Europe it would be very disadvantageous for Russia to have an important part of the army occupied so far from home."

Yesterday I called upon M. de Giers, who informed me that he had given an account to the Emperor of our conversation of Friday, and that the Emperor had again authorized him to tell me that there was no question of an advance upon Merv. "Not only we do not want to go there," said M. de Giers, "but happily there is nothing which can require us to go there. But," he added, "the Emperor trusts that you upon your part will render a policy of abstention and moderation possible to us by not permitting English officers to haunt the oases and stir up the Turkoman population against us."

In reference to the foregoing conversation, I may observe that a son of General Kaufmann, who is known to be the bearer of an elaborate exposition of General Skobeleff's views and proposals, will arrive here in a few days, and that it is possible, though under the circumstances I have narrated hardly likely, that the perusal of these documents may again lead to a modification of the intentions of the Emperor.

No. 48.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 26, 1881.

I HAVE been informed by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that General Skobeleff has at his own request been relieved of his command in Central Asia. He will, perhaps, not return to St. Petersburgh until the arrival of General Rorberg, who has been selected to replace him.

General Rorberg is especially distinguished for his administrative talents, and he has received strict instructions to direct all his energies to the pacification of the country.

General Skobeleff's return is generally regarded as an intimation that the campaign in the Téké Turkoman country is concluded.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 3 (1881).

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE respecting the Affairs in Central Asia.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1881.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

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Further Correspondence respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

No. 1.

Earl Granville to the Earl of Dufferin.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 28, 1881, 8 P.M.

INFORMATION has been received at the India Office of the arrival at Candahar of a messenger from Merv with letter from Téké Turkoman Chief, dated the 1st February, to the effect that two Russian Elchis are there.

No. 2.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received April 2.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 30, 1881.

ON receiving your Lordship's telegram of the 28th instant, intimating that news had reached Candahar of a couple of Russian agents having been sent to Merv, I questioned M. de Giers upon the subject.

His Excellency seemed quite unaware of the circumstance, but he admitted that a delegation from the Merv Turkomans had come to Skobeleff with assurances that they had no wish to prosecute further hostilities against him. "It is possible," said M. de Giers, "that, in return, General Skobeleff may have sent a couple of officers to Merv in order to tranquillize the apprehensions of the inhabitants, and insure the peace of the border. In any event, you may rest assured," added M. de Giers, "that there is no question of the acquisition of the country. Skobeleff's proximate return is a proof of this."

No. 3.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received April 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 14, 1881.

THE following telegram from General Skobeleff has just been received at St. Petersburgh:—

"Obaz-Mourad-Tykma-Serdar, Chef Principal des Tékés, est arrivé le 28 Mars à Askhabad pour y faire sa soumission. Il est accompagné d'une suite nombreuse, dans laquelle se trouvent plusieurs Serdars très influents. Tykma-Serdar m'a remis son sabre et je le lui ai rendu au nom de votre Altesse Impériale, et en lui annonçant sa grâce. Le Chef des Tékés a juré de servir fidèlement Sa Majesté l'Empereur.

"Tout est tranquille dans le pays. Les Akhal-Tékés continuent à revenir en masse de Merv. L'arrivée de Tykma-Serdar met fin à l'expédition d'Akhal-Téké. Depuis le 12 Janvier on n'a pas tiré un seul coup de fusil dans l'oasis."

M. de Giers said that the above communication did not imply the surrender of their independence by the inhabitants of Merv, or anything more than an undertaking that they would abstain from harassing the Russian troops and the districts which had now passed under Russian domination; and that I might assure your Lordship there was no intention on the part of Russia to make any territorial acquisitions in the Merv oasis. On the contrary, as General Skobeleff himself had observed, such a demonstration on the part of the Turkoman Chiefs only facilitated the prompt and immediate termination of the campaign.

M. de Giers added that eight battalions, or at all events a very considerable body of troops belonging to General Skobeleff's force, were on their way home.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

No. 4.

The Earl of Dufferin to Earl Granville.—(Received April 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 15, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose translation of a telegram (as published in the "Invalide Russe" of yesterday) sent by General Skobeleff from Askabad on the 28th March, stating that Obaz Murad Sardar, the principal Chief of the Tékés, has given in his submission.

The Chief's sword was returned to him, and he swore allegiance to the Emperor.

The General concludes by stating that tranquillity has been restored and not a shot fired in the oasis since the $\frac{1}{2}\frac{3}{4}$th January (the date of the fall of Geuk-Tépé).

The "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," in reproducing this telegram, draws attention to the assertion of the "Daily News" correspondent in this city, that General Skobeleff was advancing on Merv. This statement, says the "Journal," is false: now that Merv has ceased to be a nest of bandits there is no reason for the occupation of the place by Russia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DUFFERIN.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of April $\frac{3}{15}$, 1881.

"L'INVALIDE RUSSE" a publié hier la dépêche suivante, envoyée d'Askhabad le 28 Mars par l'Aide-de-camp, Général Skobélew, à Son Altesse Impériale, M. le Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase :—

"Obaz-Mourad-Tykma-Sardar, Chef principal des Tékés, est arrivé le 28 Mars à Askhabad pour y faire sa soumission. Il est accompagné d'une suite nombreuse, dans laquelle se trouvent plusieurs Sardars très influents. Tykma-Sardar m'a remis son sabre, que je lui ai rendu au nom de votre Altesse Impériale, et en lui annonçant sa grâce. Le Chef des Tékés a juré de servir fidèlement Sa Majesté l'Empereur.

"Tout est tranquille dans le pays. Les Akhal Tékés continuent à revenir en masse de Merv. L'arrivée de Tykma-Sardar met fin à l'expédition d'Akhal Téké. Depuis le 12 Janvier on n'a pas tiré un seul coup de fusil dans l'oasis."

D'un autre côté, le télégraphe nous a transmis hier soir l'information suivante de Londres :—

"Le correspondant du 'Daily News' à St. Pétersbourg lui ayant annoncé que le Général Skobélew serait de nouveau en route pour Merv, ce journal fait à ce sujet les réflexions suivantes : 'Ce serait un désastre Européen, un malheur pour l'Angleterre et la Russie si la vieille jalousie devaient se renouveler. Ce malheureux renouvellement ne pourrait pas être évité si l'on ne donnait pas, au sujet des mouvements du Général Skobélew, de promptes explications conformes à la lettre et à l'esprit de la déclaration faite par Sir Charles Dilke à la Chambre des Communes lors des débats sur la question de Kandahar.'"

Il aura suffi de lire la dépêche ci-dessus du Général Skobélew pour comprendre toute l'inanité des appréhensions exprimées par le "Daily News" et la fausseté des assertions de son correspondant. Pas un seul coup de fusil n'a été tiré depuis le 12 Janvier, date de la prise de Gheok-Tépé ; mais grâce à la conduite habile, c'est-à-dire humaine et loyale, du Commandant des troupes Russes, les Chefs Tékés ont renoncé à toute hostilité. La prise de Merv est désormais sans objet, puisqu'il cesse d'être nu nid de bandes inquiétant les possessions Russes. Le "Daily News" aurait-il donc voulu que la Russie, obligeât les Akhal Tékés à demeurer en hostilité et à continuer leurs déprédations ? Mr. Dilke a-t-il jamais rien dit de semblable à la Chambre des Communes, et le récent rappel d'officiers Anglais qui hantaient ces contrées en "touristes" et en "volontaires," ne prouve-t-il pas que le Cabinet de Londres n'envisage point la politique des hostilités sourdes dans l'Asie Centrale comme nécessaire à la sécurité des possessions et de l'influence Anglaises ?

No. 5.

Mr. Gosselin to Earl Granville.—(Received April 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 17, 1881.*

WITH reference to his Excellency the Earl of Dufferin's despatch of the 15th instant, giving the text of a telegram sent by General Skobeleff from Askabad, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Golos" of to-day publishes the following telegram from its special correspondent at Krasnovodsk, dated yesterday:—"General Skobeleff is expected to arrive here in a few days. He has taken leave of the troops at Askabad, thanked them for their services, and announced that, the object of the campaign having been attained, the expedition is now finished. The General will pass through Geuk-Tépé, Samursk, Bami, and Chekishlar, leaving final instructions all along the line, and will take steamer at Krasnovodsk. It is said that he will proceed straight to St. Petersburgh."

The "Golos" correspondent at Tashkend telegraphs, under the same date, that a slight improvement has taken place in General Kaufmann's condition, and that General Kolpakovsky, who left Vernoë yesterday, is expected to arrive at Tashkend on Monday the 18th instant.

General Kaufmann is reported to have had a paralytic stroke.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LE M. GOSSELIN.

No. 6.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 25.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, March 2, 1881.*

AT an interview which I had yesterday with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, his Excellency stated that M. Zinoview, my Russian colleague, had informed him that General Skobeleff was still at Geuk-Tépé, and that it was his intention to dispatch a force, viâ Abiverd and Kelat, to Tejjen, where a large number of the Akhal fugitives were now assembled.

In answer to an inquiry which I then made as to the nationality of the country in question, his Excellency said that these places did not belong to the Turkomans, but were unquestionably Persian territory, and added that the inhabitants of these districts were neither Akhal Turkomans nor nomads, but Aulcilis and other settled tribes, forming a fixed population, who acknowledge the sovereignty of and paid tribute to His Majesty the Shah.

Mirza Saïd Khan further informed me that M. Zinoview had spoken of the necessity, in view of recent events, of coming to some definite understanding with the Persian Government as to the line of frontier along the Khorassan border.

I have had the honour to communicate the substance of this despatch to his Excellency the Viceroy of India by telegraph this day.

No. 7.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 25.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, March 11, 1881.*

I LEARN that the Atek of Dereghez is now occupied by a portion of General Skobeleff's force, composed of 2,000 cavalry, the same number of infantry, and 6 pieces of artillery, and that the Russians have erected marks indicative of their having assumed possession of the country in the Atek of Kelat.

No. 8.

Mr. Gosselin to Earl Granville.—(Received April 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 20, 1881.*

THE "Golos" of the $\frac{6}{18}$th instant, commenting on the telegraphic intelligence that General Skobeleff would return to St. Petersburgh in the course of a few days, expresses the fervent hope that the Akhal Téké expedition will be the last of the kind undertaken by Russia in Central Asia, and that the Caucasian and Trans-Caspian authorities will refrain for the future from creating those conditions owing to which

Russia, through the "force of events," is from time to time involved in profitless expeditions.

The "Novoe Vremya" of yesterday notes with satisfaction the submission of Ovaz Murad, the Chief of the Tékés, to Russian authority; this new Russian victory in Central Asia, the "Novoe Vremya" remarks, is highly distasteful to the English press, which considers that the Merv Turkomans will follow the example of their Akhal Téké brethren. In such a case Merv—the "Queen of the World"—practically belongs already to Russia, whose military success is thus crowned by a political triumph of no small significance. In any case, the Merv Tékés will no longer come under the baneful influence of English emissaries, the sphere of English intrigue against Russia in Central Asia becomes limited, and Russia acquires a more defined and convenient frontier in the Trans-Caspian. Under these circumstances, no importance need be attached to English dissatisfaction, as "our neighbour in Asia" will have to recognize accomplished facts, *i.e.*, the subjugation of the Téké oasis.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LE M. GOSSELIN.

No. 9.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 19.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April 5*, 1881.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday informed me that although no formal negotiation had taken place with the Russian Government in respect to the demarcation of the line of frontier between Russia and Persia, on the borders of Khorassan, he had recently held several conversations with the Russian Minister on the subject.

He had explained, he said, to M. Zinoview, by order of the Shah, what was claimed as Persian territory along the whole line of the Northern Khorassan border, and his statement had been to the following effect:—

The Akhal territory was recognized by Persia as being beyond the limits of her dominions, but all other districts not actually occupied by Akhal Turkomans formed part of the Province of Khorassan, and belonged therefore to Persia. This included within the Persian territory Kari Kala, Kokhor, Firozeh, and Kush Khaneh, and in fact all the districts situated to the north of Boojnoord and Kuchan between the Attrek river and the Akhal mountain range. In the direction of Dereghez, Gavers was considered by the Persian Government to be the last and most easterly Akhal Settlement, and all the villages to the east of that place belonged to Dereghez and Khelat, both of which districts, together with the Tejjen lands further east, were Persian possessions.

Mirza Saeed Khan stated that the Russian Minister had not yet given any clear expression of the views of his Government on this subject. He was disposed, however, to admit Persia's right to Kari Kala, though he had hinted that the claim to Nokhor was doubtful. With reference to the Upper Attrek Valley, he had suggested that such villages as were not actually now in Persian occupation, or had been deserted by their inhabitants, might possibly be considered by the Russian Government as not belonging to this country, but he was unable to communicate more fully or explicitly on these matters until further information had been obtained from General Skobeleff to whom reference had been made.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs was of opinion that Russia did not intend to claim the Attrek River as the line of frontier towards Boojnoord and Kuchan, as M. Zinoview had said that, strictly speaking, that claim might have been put forward, and that the determination of his Government not to insist upon it should be accepted by Persia as a proof of moderation and good-will on the part of the Russian Government towards Persia.

Mirza Saeed Khan informed me that he had met the observations made by M. Zinoview by saying that the temporary withdrawal of the inhabitants from villages which were exposed to Turkoman raids could not invalidate the Shah's territorial right over them, and by maintaining that no territory outside of the limits occupied by the Akhal Téké tribe could be claimed by Russia. M. Zinoview had thereupon observed that Gavers, which is situated some miles to the east of Anou towards Dereghez, was occupied by Akhal Turkomans, and that it could not therefore be claimed by Persia; to which the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that the

inhabitants of that place came orignally from Akhal, but that they had separated themselves from the tribe, and were now peaceable cultivators of the soil, who owed allegiance to the Shah, and paid taxes to the Persian Governor of Dereghez.

The Persian Government considers that importance is attached by Russia to the possession of Gavers, as it lies on the direct line of march from Akhal to the Atek of Kelat and the Tejjen. A force moving in that direction would, it is said, if unable to pass through Gavers, have to traverse the desert further to the north, where it would encounter great difficulty.

Russian Engineers, with an escort of Cossacks, are now surveying the districts along the northern frontiers of Khorassan, and they have permission from the Persian Government to pass into Persian territory whenever they require to do so, in order to complete their surveys. The Shah has given orders that a Persian engineer should also visit that part of the frontier, and prepare a map for the Persian Government, but the person selected for this duty does not appear to possess the necessary qualifications.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 10.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 25, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship the text of an Imperial Ukase announcing the annexation to the Empire of the territory of the Téké Turkomans which is occupied by the Imperial troops. That territory, together with the Transcaspian military district, is to be called the "Transcaspian Territory," and is to be incorporated in the military district ("circonscription militaire") of the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

P.S.—General Röhrberg has been appointed Governor of the Transcaspian region and Commander of the troops stationed there.

H. W.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of May $\frac{13}{25}$, 1881.

St. Pétersbourg, le 12 *Mai*, 1881.

OUKASE DE SA MAJESTÉ L'EMPEREUR AU SÉNAT DIRIGEANT.—Ayant jugé utile, en vue de consolider la tranquillité et la sécurité dans les steppes Transcaspiennes, d'annexer à l'Empire le territoire des Turcomans-Tékés occupé par nos troupes, nous ordonnons, savoir:

Il est formé avec ce pays et la contrée de la section militaire de la Transcaspienne un seul territoire sous le nom de "Territoire de la Transcaspienne," qui est incorporé dans la conscription militaire du Caucase. L'administration générale du nouveau territoire est confiée au Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase et l'administration locale au Commandant du territoire, sous les ordres duquel sont placées les troupes qui s'y trouvent.

Le Commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Caucase instituera une administration temporaire du territoire de la Transcaspienne, selon les circonstances du moment et d'après les conditions locales.

Le Sénat Dirigeant est chargé de l'exécution des présentes.

(Signé) ALEXANDRE.

Gatchina, le 6 *Mai*, 1881.

(Translation.)

St. Petersburgh, May 12, 1881.

UKASE OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY TO THE EXECUTIVE SENATE.—Having judged it expedient, with a view to insure tranquillity and security in the Transcaspian steppes, to annex to the Empire the territory of the Téké Turkomans occupied by our troops, we command as follows:—

This country and the country of the military section of the Transcaspian shall constitute one territory, to be called the "Transcaspian Territory," and to be incorporated in the military district of the Caucasus. The general administration of the new territory is entrusted to the Commander-in-chief of the army of the Caucasus, and the local administration to the Commander of the territory under whose orders the troops there are placed.

The Commander-in-chief of the army of the Caucasus shall institute a temporary administration for the Transcaspian territory, according to circumstances and local conditions.

The Executive Senate is entrusted with the execution of these presents.

(Signed) ALEXANDER.

Gatchina, May 6, 1881.

No. 11.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received May 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 25, 1881.

I MENTIONED to M. de Giers to-day having seen the Ukase incorporating the Téké Turkoman territory with the Empire, which Ukase I have inclosed to your Lordship in my previous despatch of to-day's date. M. de Giers said that it referred to the Téké oasis, that everything was quiet there, and that the Tékés got on well with the Russian troops, of whom there were but a very small number, General Skobeleff, who is at present at St. Petersburgh, having withdrawn the greater part of them from the Téké Turkoman territory. M. de Giers also said that General Skobeleff had so arranged affairs before leaving for St. Petersburgh as to allow the Tékés to govern themselves almost entirely.

His Excellency spoke very highly of the qualities of the Tékés, who, he said, were not only good warriors, but a people upon whose word reliance could be placed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 12.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received June 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 30, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, for your Lordship's information, an extract from the "Voix," published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the $\frac{17}{29}$th instant, giving some account of the deputation of the Téké Turkomans recently arrived at St. Petersburgh. At the head of the deputation, which consists of five members, is Tykma Sirdar, late Commander-in-chief of the Téké forces. Accompanying them is said to be a certain Kholli Sirdar, who has come to see the capital of the White Czar, his troops, and Russia in general, so as to be able to report upon what he sees to his countrymen, the Turkomans of Merv.

Tykma Sirdar is reported to have stated that the Tékés who have submitted to Russia number 40,000 families.

I have also the honour to inclose an abstract from the "Novoe Vremyia" paper of the $\frac{14}{26}$th instant, commenting upon the advantages to Russia of the annexation of the Téké Turkoman country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of May $\frac{17}{29}$, 1881.

LA "Voix" annonce que le 15 Mai, à 8 heures du matin, est arrivée à St. Pétersbourg, par le chemin de fer Nicolas, une députation de nouveaux sujets Russes, les Turcomans Tékés. La députation se compose de cinq membres. A sa tête se trouve Tykma Sardar, le ci-devant Chef des forces armées des Tékés. C'est un homme de 55 ans, de taille moyenne, de constitution très robuste. Son visage, qui brille d'intelligence, est encadré d'une barbe entièrement blanche, le regard est perçant, le front ridé. Il est vêtu de deux robes Orientales superposées, ceint d'un sabre Persan

et coiffé d'un bonnet conique en Astrakhan, s'arrondissant au sommet. Tykma Sardar a eu lors de la dernière guerre la poitrine traversée d'une balle Russe. Il a amené avec lui à St. Pétersbourg son fils Ourazberdy, garçon de 10 ans, dont la figure respire la droiture. Tykma Sardar désire placer son fils dans une des écoles militaires de notre capitale. On croit qu'il sera admis au corps des pages.

Les autres membres de la députation sont: Aviz, Téké notable, jeune homme presque imberbe, et Kholli Sardar, un vieillard de 60 ans environ, d'assez haute taille et à barbe blanche. Ce Turcoman ne fait point partie, à proprement parler, de la députation Téké, il l'accompagne seulement dans le but de voir la capitale du Tsar Blanc, ses troupes, et la Russie en général, afin de pouvoir raconter ensuite ce qu'il a vu à ses congénères, les Turcomans de Merv. Les députés ont avec eux un serviteur Téké, Kol Mohamed. Les figures des Tékés n'ont rien de farouche.

La députation est accompagnée du Capitaine de cavalerie Baïtokow et d'un djighite d'origine Kirghize, Youssoup Akboulatow, ayant appartenu à l'escorte du Général Skobéleff et décoré de la Croix de St. George, ainsi que de plusieurs médailles.

La députation est partie de Bhami le 19 Avril et s'est dirigée sur Astrakhan. Elle a passé un jour à Moscou et a beaucoup admiré le Kremlin, dont les tours aux sommets pointus rappellent un peu les minarets Musulmans. A St. Pétersbourg la députation est logée à l'Hôtel d'Europe. Tykma Sardar raconte qu'il a perdu dans la dernière guerre son fils aîné, mort en héros devant les tranchées Russes. Il dit que les Tékés qui se sont soumis à la Russie sont au nombre de 40,000 familles. "Nous avons su combattre les troupes du Tsar Blanc," dit le Chef de la députation Téké, "mais nous saurons aussi prouver notre fidélité et notre dévouement à celui qui nous a vaincus."

Tous les Tékés portent des robes Orientales et des bonnets d'Astrakhan.

Inclosure 2 in No. 12.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremyia" of May $\frac{14}{26}$, 1881.

(Translation.)

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the $\frac{14}{26}$th May, commenting on the Ukase notifying the annexation of the Téké Turkoman territory, considers that such annexation comes very opportunely with the cession to China of Kuldja. The article says:—

"The Akhal Téké oasis is an advantageous acquisition principally in strategical respects.

"The importance of the new territory is threefold: (1) in regard to the routes leading into Central Asia; (2) as regards the pacification of the Transcaspian region; and lastly, in respect to neighbouring Asiatic States.

"It is well known that the route along the Attrek to Herat and Candahar is the best, if not the sole one, in the event of an expedition against East India. The occupation of a strong base on this route is clearly of great importance in strategical respects, and must in its turn influence the friendly disposition of England. The firmer we take up a position on the road to India the more yielding becomes the policy of England in the Eastern question.

"Similarly, it does not need special demonstration to show that the consolidation of our position in the Transcaspian region cements our friendship with Persia, the northern provinces of which will cease to be the scene of savage Turkoman raids, and it will further finally subordinate Khiva, Bokhara, and other semi-independent Central Asian Khanates to the political influence of Russia.

"In this manner these Khanates will represent islands bounded on two sides by Russian territory."

No. 13.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received June 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 1, 1881.*

WITH reference to my despatches of the 25th and 30th ultimo, your Lordship will have remarked that the boundaries of the Téké country, lately annexed to Russia, are not clearly defined in the Imperial Ukase.

I understand that General Röhrberg, who has been appointed to command there, has been selected for the post on account of his pacific tendencies, and that he is to devote himself to establishing order in the country over which his command extends.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 14.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received June 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 6, 1881.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to inclose herewith an account, as published in the semi-official "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day, of the reception by their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress at Gatchina of the members of the Téké Turkoman deputation.

The Emperor appears to have received them most graciously, and to have appointed Tykma Sirdar to the rank of a "Chef d'Escadron" of Militia in the Russian service, and to have presented him with the épaulettes appertaining to that rank. His Majesty is also stated to have given him a sword of honour, and a gold watch and chain, and to have presented gold watches and chains to the other members of the deputation, and to have further ordered that they should be furnished with velvet Oriental dresses and medals. Tykma Sirdar's son is to be educated in St. Petersburgh.

Kholli Sirdar, a Téké from Merv, who was present at the reception of the deputation, is said to have watched the honours conferred upon Tykma Sirdar not without some envy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of $\frac{\text{May } 25}{\text{June } 6}$, 1881.

HIER, Samedi, 23 Mai, au matin, les membres de la députation Téké se sont rendus à Gatchina pour y être présentés à leurs Majesté l'Empereur et l'Impératrice. La députation se composait d'Evez Mourad Tykma Sardar, de son fils Ourazberdy, de deux Tékés de Ghéok Tépé, Mahomet Evez Seïd Ghildiew et le Khan Mahomet Riza Ogly, ainsi que d'un Téké de Merv, Khalli Haïberdiew. Les délégués étaient tous habillés de robes à l'Orientale, en drap noir galonné d'argent, et passées par-dessus d'autres robes de couleur. Ils avaient pour coiffure des bonnets Tékés en astrakhan. Tykma Sardar portait un sabre. La députation était accompagnée du Capitaine de Cavalerie Baïtokow, du Lieutenant-Colonel Meschétika, de l'Etat-Major, et du Colonel Aminow, Chef de l'Etat-Major des troupes de la région Transcaspienne.

A la gare de Gatchina des voitures de la Cour Impériale attendaient la députation. Un appartement a été mis à sa disposition au Palais. Après une légère collation, pendant laquelle les délégués ont été rejoints par M. le Général-Major Sobolew, Chef de la Section Asiatique de l'Etat-Major, la députation, précédée d'un piqueur de la Cour, a été conduite dans les appartements particuliers de Sa Majesté l'Empereur, où, dans la première salle de réception, elle a été présentée à M. l'Aide-de-camp Général Vannovski, Gérant du Ministère de la Guerre. A midi 40 minutes les délégués ont été introduits dans la salle où devait avoir lieu leur présentation à Sa Majesté l'Empereur.

Sur le coup d'une heure, Sa Majesté l'Empereur est entré dans la Salle, en petite tenue de Général, portant la croix de St. George au cou. Les Tékés, croisant les bras sur la poitrine, ont salué profondément le Souverain. Sa Majesté l'Empereur s'est approché de Tykma Sardar. Le Colonel Aminow a présenté l'un après l'autre tous les délégués, à commencer par Tykma Sardar, auquel Sa Majesté a fait plusieurs questions sur le rôle qu'il a joué pendant la dernière campagne. Le chef des délégués Tékés a exprimé en son nom et au nom de tous ses congénères le désir de rester "jusqu'à la fin des siècles" de fidèles sujets et serviteurs du Tsar Blanc. A la question

de Sa Majesté relative au fils de Tykma Sardar, ce dernier a répondu qu'il désirait le faire entrer dans une école militaire Russe.

Pendant cet entretien sont entrés dans la salle de réception Sa Majesté l'Impératrice et leurs Altesses Impériales Monseigneurs le Grand Duc Césarévitch, et le Grand Duc George Alexandrovitch. Les Tékés ont salué profondément la Souveraine et Monseigneurs les Grand Ducs.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur a gracieusement questionné chacun de membres de la députation.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur a remis de ses propres mains à Tykma Sardar les épaulettes d'argent de Chef d'Escadron de la Milice et lui a annoncé son élévation à ce grade au service militaire de la Russie. Tykma Sardar a reçu en outre des mains de Sa Majesté un sabre d'honneur et une montre en or, avec chaîne du même métal. Tous les autres membres de la députation ont reçu des mains du Souverain des montres en or avec chaîne. Sa Majesté a ordonné, de plus, de distribuer à tous les députés des robes à l'Oriental en velours et des médailles.

Après avoir souhaité aux Tékés de vivre paisiblement, Sa Majesté l'Impereur s'est retiré, avec Sa Majesté l'Impératrice et leurs Altesses Impériales Monseigneurs les Grands Ducs.

Touchés jusqu'aux larmes, les Tékés se montraient dans un enchantement indescriptible. "Je n'osais même pas rêver un bonheur pareil," disait Tykma Sardar. Son fils va être placé d'abord au pensionnat préparatoire de l'école de cavalerie Nicolas, puis au corps de pages. Quand on lui a annoncé qu'il allait commencer ses études, le petit Ourazberdy a demandé des explications sur le travail qui l'attendait. On lui a dit que dans les heures de récréation il serait libre de courir et de se promener. "Je ne veux pas courir, a répondu le petit Téké, je veux apprendre pour devancer les autres."

La députation a été reconduite dans l'appartement qui lui avait été réservé et où l'attendait un splendide déjeuner. Après le repas Tykma Sardar a cient le sabre d'honneur que le Souverain lui avait donné et on a assujetti les épaulettes à sa robe de dessus. Il était enchanté et ses compatriotes aussi. Le Téké de Merv le regardait non sans quelque envie. Le nouveau chef d'escadron Russe a alors été félicité par tous les Russes qui assistaient au déjeuner. Tykma Sardar les a remerciés en leur serrant la main et en faisant le salut militaire Russe. Il répétait à chaque instant: "Notre Tsar Blanc est grand, puissant, glorieux, et bon."

No. 15.

Earl Granville to Mr. Wyndham.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 13, 1881.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 25th ultimo, which incloses the text of an Imperial Ukase announcing the annexation to the Russian Empire of the territory of the Téké Turkomans occupied by the Russian troops.

The Imperial Ukase gives no precise definition of the extent of territory to be thus annexed, and I should wish you to ascertain what are the boundaries of the territory in question.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 16.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 20.)

My Lord, *Tehran, May* 19, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 5th April last, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the negotiations therein referred to as likely soon to take place in respect to the Russo-Persian line of frontier in Khorassan have not yet commenced.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that the surveys necessary for preparing maps of the Akhal territory and the northern parts of Khorassan, which are being made by Russian officers, cannot be completed for two or three months yet, and that until these maps are ready the demarcation of the frontier will not be proceeded with.

I am further informed by his Excellency that he had recently instructed the Persian Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburgh to repeat to the Russian Government what he had himself said to M. Zinoview here, to the effect that all territory not occupied by Akhal Turkomans would be claimed by the Shah as belonging to Persia, and that he has received satisfactory assurances in reply from that official as to the moderate views now entertained by Russia in this matter, and the probability that the frontier question will be settled without any claim being raised which would encroach upon the territorial rights of Persia in Khorassan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 17.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received June 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 15, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I showed M. de Giers this afternoon the statements which appeared in the "Times" and "Standard" of the 9th instant respecting reported negotiations between the Russian Government and the Merv Turkomans, and that I also showed him the report of a question which had been asked in the House of Commons by Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, and of Sir Charles Dilke's reply.

With regard to the "Transcaspian territory," M. de Giers again stated that the part annexed to Russia was the Téké oasis, in which, I understood him to say, Askabad was the southernmost town; that the boundaries were not yet marked out, but that that was in course of execution. He said that reports had been lately received from General Röhrberg that all was quiet there; and he added that the General was an administrator, and not an officer who was likely to engage in warlike expeditions. I had the honour to report to the effect that I had heard that General Röhrberg was peacefully disposed in my despatch of the 1st instant.

With regard to Merv, his Excellency said that there was no question of negotiating a Treaty with the Merv Turkomans, or of establishing a Resident there; that he had seen the Merv Chief who is here at present, and had told him that Russia had no hostile intentions towards his people, and that she wished to be on friendly terms with them.

Baron de Jomini, whom I saw last night, and to whom I mentioned the subject, said that there were no formal negotiations going on for a Treaty with the Merv Turkomans, that they had been told that Russia wished to be upon peaceful terms with them; but, he said, there are two parties amongst them, one for peace, the other for war, and that raids upon Russian territory could not be permitted.

Baron de Jomini also told me last night that a report had reached the Government that thirty-two English artillerymen were on the point of coming to Merv, and that two of them were said to have already arrived there. M. de Giers told me that he had communicated this report to Prince Lobanow, stating, however, that he attached no belief to it. I said that, judging from what I had observed of the policy of Her Majesty's Government in Central Asia, I did not think there could be any truth in the rumour, and that the only Englishman I knew of as being at Merv was a correspondent of the "Daily News," and that he now appeared to be sojourning there against his will. M. de Giers laughed, and said that his reports from Merv had been most useful to General Skobeleff, who had declined to allow Mr. O'Donovan, or any other correspondent, to accompany his army.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 18.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received June 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 15, 1881.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 6th instant, and to my despatch of to-day, I have the honour to state that the "Invalide Russe" of the 27th May / 8th June notified the

appointment of Evaz Murad Tykma Sirdar, late Commander-in-Chief of the Akhal Téké forces, to the rank of Major of Militia in the Russian service, and that the "Moscow Gazette" of the $\frac{30\text{th May}}{11\text{th June}}$ announced that he would take part in the civil administration of the Turkoman country recently annexed by the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 19.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 27.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, June* 22, 1881.

WITH reference to the orders contained in your Lordship's despatch of the 13th instant, I have the honour to report that I spoke to M. de Giers to-day respecting the boundaries of the Téké oasis lately incorporated in the Russian Empire.

I reminded his Excellency that he had told me that the frontiers were not yet marked out, but that measures were being taken with that object, and I then asked him if there would be any objection to informing Her Majesty's Government what those boundaries were when they had been defined.

His Excellency replied that he did not know the boundaries; and that, although he did not think there would be any secret about them, he could not take any engagement beforehand as to making them known, and he remarked, "You do the same thing" (meaning you annex territories), "and I am not aware that you are asked what your frontiers are."

His Excellency then went on to say that all being quiet in the Téké country, they would see if the frontiers could be marked out, and he added that the Kurds being tranquil, and the Persians also, the moment was favourable for making maps, which were much required, and he said that *pourparlers* of a vague nature had commenced between Russia and Persia to come to some arrangement as to frontiers. I said, "Do you mean a rectification of frontiers?" and his Excellency answered, "Yes," and I clearly understood him to refer to the line of frontier from the Caspian to the head or sources of the River Attrek, and his Excellency, apparently to illustrate the necessity of a rectification of frontiers with Persia, mentioned Karakala, about which he said disputes were constantly arising between Russia and Persia.

No. 20.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 24, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 6th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith, for your Lordship's information, an account, as published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day, of the reception by the Grand Duke Michael Nicholaievitch and by the Minister of War of the Deputation of Téké Turkomans at present in St. Petersburgh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of January $\frac{12}{24}$, 1881.

LE même jour les Députés Tékés se sont présentés à son Altesse Impériale Mgr. le Grand-Duc Michael Nicolaïévitch, dans son bien de Mikhaïlovskoé. Le Chef de la députation, Tykma Sardar, actuellement Chef d'Escadron au service Russe, portait sur con costume habituel les épaulettes de son rang et le sabre d'honneur qui lui a été donné par Sa Majesté l'Empereur. Le fils de Tykma Sardar, le petit Ouraz

Berdy, était déjà habillé en élève de la pension préparatoire de l'Ecole de Cavalerie Nicolas, où il a été admis.

Parmi les députés se trouvaient deux Tékés récemment arrivés, Avez Kouly Sardar et Koulba Tyr. Son Altesse Impériale a reçu fort gracieusement la députation et c'est entretenue au moyen d'un interprète avec plusieurs de ses membres.

Les deux Tékés nouvellement arrivés ont supplié le Grand-Duc de leur faire obtenir le bonheur de voir le Tsar Blanc afin de pouvoir lui exprimer leurs sentiments de féaux sujets. Son Altesse Impériale a bien voulu serrer la main à Tykma Sardar, et faire quelques caresses à son fils. A l'observation du Grand-Duc que celui-ci allait s'ennuyer à St. Pétersbourg sans son père, le petit Téké à répondu qu'il n'aurait pas le temps de s'ennuyer, vu qu'il se disposait à apprendre avec la plus grande application. De retour à St. Pétersbourg, la députation est allée directement à la Chancellerie du Ministre de la Guerre, où les attendaient dans des cartons blancs les robes d'honneur à l'Orientale dont Sa Majesté l'Empereur a ordonné de les gratifier. Toutes ces robes, à l'exception de celle destinée à Tykma Sardar, sont en velours bleu doublées de soie et galonnées d'argent. Celle de Tykma Sardar est en velours ponceau à double rang de galon en argent. Ces robes ont été distribuées par M. le Gérant du Ministère de la Guerre lui-même, à l'exception du celle du petit Ouraz Berdy, qui porte déjà l'uniforme d'élève militaire. M. l'Aide-de-camp Général Vanovsky a adressé aux députés une courte allocution en les engageant à se livrer à des travaux pacifiques de retour dans leur partrie et à oublier leurs anciens exploits d'invasions. Les Tékés sont revenus enthousiasmés à l'hôtel Znamensky.

No. 21.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received July 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 29, 1881.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 15th instant, I think Askabad should be alluded to as the most south-eastern town of the Téké oasis, and not as the most southern town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 22.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received July 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 29, 1881.*

I VENTURE to draw your Lordship's attention to a review in the semi-official "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day of an article written by General Annenkow, entitled, "l'Oasis de l'Akhaltéké et les Routes de l'Inde."

The passage in the article in question, which is herewith inclosed, which appears to me to be most worthy of notice, is the one in which the prolongation of the railroad from Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat and to "Serakes" is talked of. "Serakes" is probably the same place as "Sarakhs," on the River Tajend, as marked on the map of the Téké Turkoman country and surrounding districts, which has been supplied to Her Majesty's Embassy.

A suggestion is also thrown out that, were England to complete her system of railroads in the same direction (viz., Sarakhs) through Candahar and Herat, a rapid and regular communication from Europe to India, and from India to Europe, through Russia, would be established.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 22.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of June $\frac{17}{29}$, 1881.

LA "Nouvelle Revue" vient de publier deux articles remarquables sous le titre de "l'Oasis de l'Akhaltéké et les Routes de l'Inde."

Ces articles, empruntés à un de nos recueils périodiques, sont destinés à initier le public Européen aux vues qui ont cours parmi la haute administration Russe au sujet de l'Asie Centrale. Rien ne pouvait être plus opportun en présence de l'ignorance et des préjugés qui tendent à dénaturer la politique Russe dans ses rapports avec la politique Anglaise en Asie.

Ce travail remarquable est dû à la plume de M. le Général Annenkow, qui a longtemps résidé dans la steppe Turcomane, où il a été chargé en dernier lieu de l'établissement du chemin de fer de Krasnovodsk à Kizil-Arvat. Personne ne pouvait être mieux à même de traiter de l'avenir de ces contrées et des intérêts militaires, commerciaux, et politiques qui s'y rattachent.

Le public Européen aura enfin sous les yeux autre chose que des élucubrations fantaisistes sur ces pays inconnus, dépeints jusqu'ici, par de faux savants, sous des couleurs visiblement empruntées au prisme de l'esprit de parti politique. A vrai dire, ils étaient à peu près aussi ignorés de la Russie que de l'Europe, et l'obscurité se peuple facilement de fantômes.

Les points de vue de M. le Général Annenkow lui sont personnels. Mais ils ont cela de bon qu'ils sont basés sur une étude approfondie des localités et qu'ils émanent d'une autorité évidemment compétente par sa position.

Nul doute qu'ils n'aient beaucoup de retentissement.

Nous n'entrerons pas dans l'analyse de ce travail. Il doit être lu en entier.

Nous nous bornerons à en signaler l'esprit. L'auteur étudie, d'après les faits, la position respective de la Russie et de l'Angleterre en Asie, et c'est d'après leurs intérêts qu'il juge de leur politique. Assurément, on ne saurait trouver une base plus rationnelle.

Il est remarquable qu'il arrive par cette voie, essentiellement subjective, à la même conviction que le Gouvernement Russe a maintes fois exprimée d'après des considérations plutôt morales et diplomatiques, et qui a été partagée par plusieurs hommes d'État éminents de l'Angleterre : savoir, que les deux Empires n'ont aucun motif pour se placer en antagonisme en Asie, qu'il y a assez de place dans ce vaste continent pour qu'ils puissent se développer parallèlement chacun dans sa sphère naturelle, sans se heurter, et qu'enfin, autant ils peuvent se nuire réciproquement par une rivalité factice, autant ils peuvent se servir mutuellement et s'entr'aider par de bons procédés et des relations franchement amicales.

L'auteur va même plus loin et trace la voie pratique à suivre pour atteindre ce but.

C'est par le commerce qu'il établit le lien solide et durable qui doit unir les deux Empires au lieu de les diviser. Personne ne contestera certainement la puissance de ce lien, qui se resserre et se consolide à mesure qu'il se développe et multiplie les intérêts solidaires.

La route est déjà entr'ouverte par la construction du chemin de fer de Krasnovodsk. Lorsqu'il aura atteint Kisil-Arvat et sera prolongé jusqu'à Serakes, si de son côté l'Angleterre complète son réseau Indien dans la même direction par Kandahar et Hérat, les deux Empires auront marché à la rencontre l'un de l'autre, non plus par des intrigues politiques, des armées, des canons, des guerres dispendieuses et des excitations à la haine réciproque, mais par un des plus féconds instruments de civilisation pacifique qui existent. Quand une communication rapide et régulière d'Europe par la Russie aux Indes et des Indes par la Russie en Europe sera établie, une lutte entre les deux Empires sera hors de toute probabilité, la question Asiatique aura été irrévocablement, pacifiquement résolue au profit de tous les deux et pour le bien général de la civilisation et de l'humanité.

Il est possible que, de part et d'autre, les préjugés invétérés fassent envisager ces points de vue comme des rêveries utopiques. C'est le sort de beaucoup de vérités, de commencer par être taxées d'erreur.

Il n'en est pas moins remarquable, nous le répétons, qu'ils émanent d'une autorité Russe des plus competentes et qu'ils sont fondés sur des considérations pratiques d'une incontestable valeur.

On peut donc hardiment prédire que ces idées feront leur chemin dans la conscience publique des deux pays, et pour notre part nous ne pouvons qu'y applaudir.

No. 23.

Earl Granville to Mr. Wyndham.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July 5, 1881.*

I HAVE to instruct you to make inquiries as to whether any map has been published in Russia showing the boundaries of the recently annexed territory in the Akhal country, and if such a map has been, or may be, published, to send home copies of it, in order that one may be placed in the Library of the House of Commons, in accordance with the promise made to that effect by Sir C. Dilke in the House on the 27th ultimo.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 24.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July 21, 1881.*

CAN you obtain information for Parliament as to extent of Transcaspian territory annexed by Russia, and the places now occupied by her in that region ?

No. 25.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received July 22, 12·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, July 22, 1881.*

YOUR Lordship's telegram of yesterday.

Limits of Transcaspian country annexed by Russia have not yet been defined. The territory now occupied by her troops includes Chat, Duzolum, and the Akhal Téké region north of Kopet Dagh, as far as Askabad and Annow, latter being the most easterly point in her possession. Russian influence predominates in adjacent districts.

Demarcation of Russo-Persian frontier has not yet been commenced, and Russian Minister has informed me that his Government will not be in a position to enter upon discussion till beginning of next year.

Above information communicated to your Lordship in a despatch of 11th instant.

No. 26.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received July 25.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, July 19, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a general officer, who has been in the Téké country which has been recently annexed to the Russian Empire, and who has taken a leading part there in matters connected with the construction of railway communication, informed me to-day that the railway went as far as Kizil-Arvat, and that there was no intention of extending it further for the present. He also informed me, in reply to my inquiries, that there are towns in the Téké oasis recently annexed to Russia further south than Askabad, and that there are two towns named Sarakhs, both on the River Tajend, but on different banks opposite to each other—the one being a Persian town, the other a Turkoman town; consequently, he said, if the railroad were to be extended, there would be no necessity for interfering with the Persian town of that name.

No. 27.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 20, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of yesterday's date, I have the honour to state that the Téké oasis lately annexed to Russia is thus described in an article by Lieutenant-General Annenkoff in the numbers of the "Nouvelle Revue" of June last:—"It commences at Kizil-Arvat, follows the line of the Kiourrem-Dagh and the Kopeth-Dagh, through Bami, Geuk-Tépé, and Askabad, as far as Sarakhs. The first part of this zone, which extends from Kizil-Arvat to Bami, is fertile, and abundantly supplied with water, but it cannot be compared with the second zone, which stretches from Bami, through Geuk-Tépé, as far as Askabad, and some miles further."

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 28.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 20, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that I asked Baron Jomini to-day whether the Imperial Government was making progress in their negotiations with Persia for a rectification of frontiers. His Excellency said they were not; that it was a very difficult matter to define what was Persian and what not in the district called Atrek, at the head waters of the Atrek, respecting which negotiations had been set on foot, and that it would be necessary to send a Commission of engineer officers to examine into the question on the spot. His Excellency said that some very fertile country had been found, but that it was overrun by Turkomans, and that it was necessary to establish some sort of order there.

I asked him if the Téké oasis extended as far as Sarakhs, and whether there were two towns of that name. His Excellency replied that he believed the Téké oasis extended as far as Askabad; that there was only one town called Sarakhs, and that it was a disputed point as to whether it was a Persian town or not.

I also asked his Excellency if the Russian Government was negotiating with regard to Khorassan and Kushan, and he replied in the negative, stating that they were purely Persian.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 29.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 20, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatch of to-day's date, and to previous despatches on the negotiations between Russia and Persia for a rectification of frontiers, I have the honour to inclose herewith, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, an abstract from the Russian press on the advantages to Russia of the territory at the head waters of the Atrek, and on other points connected with her policy in Central Asia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Abstract from Russian Press.

THE "Moscow Gazette," in its issue of the $\frac{5}{17}$th July, 1881, makes the following remarks on the subject of the statement of the Merv correspondent of the "Daily News," to the effect that the Russians were advancing eastwards in the direction of Meshed, that

they had occupied the northern bank of the Atrek River as far as Kuchan, and that they had established block-houses at a short distance from each other :—

"The road from Meshed to Herat is somewhat better than that from Merv, the only difference being that the first is very bad, while the second is almost impassable for a large detachment of troops. But this circumstance is of itself insufficient to justify the cry of alarm now raised in the English press with respect to Meshed in substitution of the former apprehensions in reference to Merv. In order to take advantage of the road from Meshed, the Russians must first reach Kuchan. The road thither from Chat leads across very high mountains and gorges, through which the Atrek in some places winds like a rivulet. This is almost as bad as the waterless route from Merv. It is only at the upper course of the river that a valley is shown on the map. Kuchan may be reached from Askabad by way of Shirvan, but this necessitates the crossing of the impassable Kopet-Dag range.

"English apprehensions are very strange in view of the fact that, from the Atrek, we must advance through Persian territory. If Persia were to open her gates to us, it would be more convenient for us to advance along the southern routes, as the English newspapers themselves acknowledge. Even if it be necessary to employ force, this line of march would be preferable. It is doubtful whether a detachment strong enough for the capture of Meshed could be marched to Kuchan. From Askabad, Chat, or the upper valley of the Atrek, we equally cannot advance without the consent of Persia or a war with her.

"The upper course of the Atrek possesses importance to us, more especially with a view to the pacification of the Téké oasis ; but this oasis is as yet little known.

"As regards the alarm expressed on the subject of our further advance and our new seizures along the Atrek, the English papers, it would seem, have fallen into error, and also into contradiction. According to the last Treaty concluded between Russia and Persia, the frontier between them in the Trans-Caspian region was determined along the course of the Atrek. This Treaty has not been published, the details are unknown ; but it is impossible to suppose that Persia has reserved for herself the middle and upper course of the Atrek, seeing that even now she exercises no authority to the northward of that river. The English newspapers state that the late General Petrusevitch was of opinion that the Persian boundary ran north of Kuchan—that is, in every case south of the Kopet-Dag. General Petrusevitch was, in all probability, acquainted with the provisions of our Treaty with Persia. But if our boundary with Persia has been fixed to the southward of the Kopet-Dag, in such case the valley of the upper waters of the Atrek must, if not altogether, then in part, even if not as far as Kuchan, be included within Russian confines. Kuchan of itself possesses no signification ; for Russia, as well as for all parties interested, considerable importance may be attached to our occupation of some portion of the valley of the upper waters of the Atrek—say, the northern portion. The great thing for us alone is, that we should firmly establish ourselves somewhere at the head waters of the Atrek. . . . . In every case, nobody can reasonably expect that we should not advance in Central Asia, or abandon that which belongs to us by former Treaties.

"It is, however, doubtful whether our pickets are now stationed on the upper course of the Atrek. It is surmised that the reports of the correspondent of the 'Daily News' are somewhat premature.

"The frontier between Persia and the Akhal Téké country may be said to be almost entirely undefined, but between ourselves and Persia there exist other frontier questions in the Trans-Caspian region. The fact of the matter is, that in concluding the latest Treaty with Persia, neither we nor the former paid any attention to the Turkomans, and drew the frontier-line promiscuously along the lower course of the Atrek River. The result of this was, that an enormous portion of the Turkomans, so-called peaceable—the Jomuds, Hoklans, Djeffeibaitré, Attabaitré, and others—became the subjects of both Russia and Persia. They pass the winter between the Atrek and Giurgan, on Persian territory, and pitch their camps in summer at the Balkans, along the Uzboi, &c. Our authority over the Turkoman has hitherto been nominal : true, they accept Elders chosen from their midst by the Russian authorities, and recognize their position ; but they will only submit to their own Ak-sakals, and they pay Russia no taxes. Persia's authority over them is still less, although 3,000 Goklan Kibitkas pay her a yearly tribute of 180,000 roubles, and the Jomuds nomadizing along the course of the Kara-Su pay a certain sum for the right of pasturing their cattle on the opposite bank of the river. Vambéry, who visited the country in 1863, states that no Persian is seen north of the Giurgan unless with a rope round his neck. M. Stebnitsky, in 1872, ascertained that the Turkomans were not paying any tribute to Persia, and only the Jomuds along the Kara-Su made presents to the Persian officials.

"Now that the Akhal country has been conquered, it will be necessary to introduce a real authority, and to put an end to the eternal conflicts between the 'peaceful' Turkomans and the Tékés. In order to do so, it will be necessary to do away with their double nationality. Russia has done so much in protecting the Caspian provinces of Persia, that she has a right to expect the co-operation of Persia in the common cause. Moreover, it would not cost much to purchase from Persia the strips of land situated between the Atrek and Giurgan."

No. 30.

Earl Granville to Mr. Wyndham.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July* 28, 1881, 3 P.M.

YOUR despatch of 19th.

Do your best to ascertain as soon as possible what are the towns south of Askabad annexed to Russia.

No. 31.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received July 29, 6 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, July* 29, 1881, 2P.M.

YOUR telegram of yesterday.

M. Jomini stated to me last Wednesday that Askabad was their furthest point now in Trans-Caspian territory, and M. de Giers had also told me this, but I will endeavour to obtain further information.

No. 32.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received August 1.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, July* 27, 1881.

WITH reference to my despatches of the 20th instant, I have the honour to report, for your Lordship's information, that I asked Baron Jomini to-day (M. de Giers being absent from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) if he could give me an idea of what the territory was which was termed "Trans-Caspian." His Excellency replied that it was "all the territory beyond the Caspian." "But," I said, "can you give me no idea as to where it ends?" to which he said that he could not, that the negotiations with Persia had not yet commenced, but that for long Russia had been established on the lower part of the River Atrek, but that the time had now come to determine what was really Persian territory and what was not elsewhere, and that the question being one of an exceedingly complicated and difficult nature, a special Commission would have to examine it on the spot. His Excellency said that their farthest point now was Askabad, but that General Skobeleff had discovered some very fertile country further south, where a complete state of disorder existed; that there was Sarakhs also to be considered, and whether it was Persian or not remained to be verified. If Persian, that then it would remain so, but if not, that it would then be necessary to establish some regular form of Government there as elsewhere ("un ordre de choses établi"), and that the frontier negotiations would probably extend to territory beyond the Atrek as far as the confines of Khorassan, over which, Baron Jomini to-day, threw doubts as to the sovereignty of the Shah of Persia being more than nominal.

No. 33.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received August 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, August* 5, 1881.

MY telegram of the 29th ultimo.

Secretary of State states that General Rohrberg's head-quarters are at Askabad; that there may be a few troops at Gavers; that troops have marched as far south as Luftabad,

but that they have returned. He looks upon country immediately surrounding Askabad as the present southern boundary of Téké oasis. "

No. 34.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 8.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, July* 11, 1881.

I UNDERSTAND that none of the districts south of the range of the Kopet Dagh have been occupied by the Russian troops, and that Annow is the most easterly point at present in their possession.

Russian officers have, with the assent of the Persian Government, been engaged for a considerable length of time in surveying the whole tract of country between the Akhal hills and Boojnoord, Kuchan, and Dereghez. I am informed, however, by M. Zinoview, my Russian colleague, that the General in command of the Russian troops in Akhal has written to him to say that it will take at least another nine months for the necessary maps to be finished and printed, and that it will be impossible to commence negotiations for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontier until these maps are completed, and they have been officially sanctioned by the Russian Government.

No. 35.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 8.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 3, 1881.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 28th ultimo I had the honour to inform your Lordship that on Wednesday, the 27th ultimo, Baron Jomini stated to me that Askabad was at present the furthest Russian point in the Trans-Caspian territory, and that M. de Giers had already given me information to the same effect. I, however, on the $\frac{17}{29}$th July, addressed a private note to M. de Giers, in which I asked him to be so good as to let me know the names of the towns further south than Askabad in the territory recently annexed to Russia. On the following day I received his Excellency's reply, written from Peterhof, copy of which is inclosed, in which he states that all he can say is that Russia occupies Askabad, and that he does not know of any town further south than that point as being occupied by Russian troops, but that, in order to give me a more positive answer, he would inquire into the subject and consult a map as soon as he went to the Ministry.

I called upon his Excellency to-day, the day in the week on which he usually receives the Diplomatic Body, but it being a holiday his Excellency had not come to town. I will, however, endeavour to see him to-morrow.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 35.

M. de Giers to Mr. Wyndham.

(Extrait.) *Peterhof, le* $\frac{18}{30}$ *Juillet,* 1881.

TOUT ce que je puis vous dire en réponse à votre billet d'hier c'est que nous occupons Askabad et que je ne connais pas de ville au sud de ce point qui soit occupée pas nos troupes. D'ailleurs, pour vous donner une réponse plue positive je vais prendre des informations et consulter la carte aussitôt que j'irai au Ministère.

(Translation.)

(Extract.) *Peterhof, July* $\frac{18}{30}$, 1881.

ALL that I can say in reply to your note of yesterday is that we occupy Askabad, and that I know no town south of this point occupied by our troops. In order to give you a more positive answer, however, I will obtain information and consult the map as soon as I get to the Office.

No. 36.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received August 15.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 10, 1881.*

THE questions which have been lately asked in the House of Commons as to Russian policy in Central Asia have naturally called forth remarks in the St. Petersburgh press, and I have the honour to inclose herewith a précis of an article from the "Herold," a paper published here in German, but which has no official character, and of two articles from the semi-official "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" which appear worthy of attention, as they have all the appearance of emanating from an official source.

With regard to Merv, your Lordship will observe that it is stated that the Russian Government has never taken any engagement. The article states:—

"Le Gouvernement Russe n'a jamais pris aucun engagement au sujet de Merv. Il n'avait pas à en prendre. Il a eu égard aux inquiétudes que le Cabinet de Londres témoignait sur ce point, et loin de repousser ses interpellations, comme il en aurait eu incontestablement le droit, il a très franchement et très amicablement fait part de ses intentions, qu'il n'avait pas à cacher parce qu'elles étaient parfaitement loyales et dictées par ces légitimes intérêts. Il a toujours déclaré qu'il n'avait aucun projet, ni aucun avantage à aller à Merv, ni à y rester, mais que si les Merviens obligeaient nos troupes par leurs agressions à les poursuivre jusque là, et à détruire ce repaire de brigands, la Russie se réservait une complète liberté d'action."

The article goes on to explain the reasons which necessitated the late attack upon, and annexation of, the Téké country.

The Earl of Dufferin reported conversations which he had held with M. de Giers on the policy of Russia with regard to Merv in his despatches of the 8th March last,* and of the 14th April last, and to which I venture to refer your Lordship with reference to the statements contained in the articles herewith inclosed from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg."

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure 1 in No. 36.

Précis of Article in the "St. Petersburgh Herald" of $\frac{\text{July } 25}{\text{August } 6}$, 1881.

ENGLAND AND THE RUSSO-PERSIAN FRONTIER.—Whilst the struggle in Afghanistan and the interference of England in that country, which will be sooner or later inevitable, only indirectly affects Russia, in so far as it may upset the Gladstone Cabinet, or force the Ministry to change their front, Her Majesty's Government are most desirous to take part in the Russo-Persian frontier demarcation, as being a matter affecting British interests. So moderate a politician as Lord Hartington has declared that the annexation of the Akhal Téké oasis, and the extension of Russia to the north of Persia, as also the matter of delimitating the new frontier, is not indifferent to England. We readily believe that his Lordship takes an interest in all this, but what practical shape can he give to this interest? Another M.P., Mr. Campbell, has publicly stated that England has neither the power nor the right to check Russia's expansion in the regions of Central Asia, lying as that country does quite out of reach of England's fleets and influence. And is this not the case? The annexation of the Akhal Téké oasis has been accomplished, without the leave of England or any other Power having been asked. Similarly the annexation of, or Protectorate over Merv, will be a matter only concerning Russia and the Turkomans, and will be announced to the world as a *fait accompli*.

As an excuse for interference, the English would like to have the Merv Turkomans recognized by Europe, as has been mooted in the letters of the correspondent of the "Daily News," now imprisoned in that place; but as what, and how are these wild Turcoman warriors to be recognized? "Give us help," they will cry, and England, by this practical question, will recognize the impossibility of a Protectorate. This question of Merv will, however, be of greater interest, when we know the result of the last Merv Turkoman mission to St. Petersburgh.

* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1881)," No. 47.

But with regard to the demarcation of the new Russo-Persian frontier diplomatic action has already commenced. In this matter England thinks she has a voice, Persia being recognized by Europe, and she has already claimed to be officially represented by a Commissioner in the work of marking out the frontier. We believe this question was first raised last month, during the visit of the English squadron to these waters; we do not know what answer was made, but a good guess can be made as to its tenour. It was stated in Parliament that the negotiations would not take place for some months; the "delay" thus alluded to is but a polite way of saying "no." Lord Hartington's answer in the House proves, however, that this claim has not been abandoned, but it will, when next presented, be met by a similar answer, for, since the frontier concerns an annexation which has been already carried out, England, if she obtained her wish, would acquire a sort of retrospective influence in a matter which has been already completed. It may, therefore, be taken for granted that, except perhaps in the form of a confidential communication, no further English interference in the frontier question will be tolerated. This question of the demarcation of the frontier between Persia and the newly annexed Akhal Téké oasis is purely a question between Persia and the present Ruler of that territory, and the interference of any third party would only have a disturbing influence. The solution of this question can only be looked at from one point of view, viz., that Russia may obtain a safe defensive frontier, and ensure a sufficient supply of water and food. If even Persia loses somewhat, it would be but "strips of frontier," over which she exercises but a purely nominal control, and in which she is powerless to prevent brigandage. This security of frontier is necessary to Russia, and no one will be able to hold her back from obtaining it. Russia has another advantage in her hands, she can play a waiting game in this frontier question; a postponement of it is all to her advantage, since the stronger Power is sure to win in the long run. Russia will not, therefore, now refuse England's wishes, but will merely postpone the question until she considers it ripe for solution, and this moment may come any day, as a consequence of the prolonged struggle in Afghanistan.

Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

Extract from the "Journal de St Pétersbourg" of $\frac{\text{July}}{\text{August}}\ \frac{26}{7}$, 1881.

LES lauriers du "Morning Post," du "Daily Telegraph," et des autres défenseurs de la politique Impériale de Lord Beaconsfield et du Marquis de Salisbury causent des insomnies à la "Gazette de Moscou." Dans la revue politique du 21 Juillet, cette honorable feuille se plaint de la trop grande déférence et même de l'humilité de la politique Russe en Asie vis-à-vis des prétentions et des susceptibilités de l'Angleterre. Celle-ci ne se gêne pas pour permettre à Londres des meetings dirigés contre la Russie, où l'on prêche ouvertement le régicide. Pourquoi donc avons-nous arrêté notre marche victorieuse dans les steppes Turcomanes par égard pour les appréhensions que causent aux Indes nos mouvements sur la route d'Hérat? Pourquoi faisons-nous des cérémonies avec l'Angleterre, qui en fait si peu avec nous?

A première vue, nous n'apercevons guère le rapport qu'il y a entre les meetings socialistes de Londres et l'Asie-Centrale. Ce sont là, ce nous semble, deux questions parfaitement distinctes.

En Asie-Centrale, nous ne pensons pas que le Cabinet Anglais actuel ait abandonné Caboul, Kandahar, et la "frontière scientifique" par égard pour la Russie. Mr. Gladstone a tout bonnement calculé que la politique de provocation, de conquêtes et d'annexations était plus nuisible qu'utile à la sécurité de l'Angleterre; que plus celle-ci étendait les limites de sa domination, plus elle se rendait vulnérable, plus elle multipliait ses difficultés et par conséquent aussi les charges qu'elle devait s'imposer; et qu'en définitive cette politique aboutissait à des sacrifices hors de proportion avec les satisfactions de l'amour-propre national.

C'est une preuve de bon sens qui fait honneur à Mr. Gladstone.

Il en est absolument de même de la politique que le Gouvernement Russe a suivie en Asie. Ce n'est assurément pas pour notre plaisir ou par vanité que nous avons mis le pied dans la steppe Turcomane, mais par nécessité. Notre position militaire y était intolérable. Les Turcomans-Tékés, excités, instruits, armés et conseillés par les officiers Anglais comme MM. Napier, Butler, &c., devenaient des voisins impossibles. Les expéditions périodiques entreprises pour réprimer leur turbulence entraînaient des dépenses considérables sans résultats, car la retraite de nos troupes,

après le châtiment de ces pillards, détruisait tout l'effet moral de nos opérations. Il fallait ou avancer ou reculer afin de s'établir solidement. Avancer nécessitait la perte de millions, mais reculer semblait encore plus dangereux et plus onéreux, car alors la steppe étant abandonnée aux Turcomans, ceux-ci ayant tout le loisir de s'organiser, de s'armer et de s'exercer avec l'aide de leurs bons amis, deviendraient de plus en plus entreprenants et ils pouvaient finir par entraîner les Khiviens et les Boukhares. Il aurait par conséquent fallu garnir de troupes toute la ligne d'Astrakhan et doubler, tripler le chiffre de nos forces militaires dans le Turkestan, dont la steppe Turcomane constitue le flanc droit. Tout cela aurait fini par coûter gros. Voilà pourquoi, malgré le désagrément d'engloutir 20,000,000 dans des sables, alors que la Russie a tant de dépenses productives à faire chez elle, notre Gouvernement s'est décidé à prendre une position avancée et permanente dans la steppe.

C'était une opération purement défensive et qui devait tout naturellement s'arrêter aux limites exigées par notre sécurité. Aller au delà aurait été suivre l'exemple de Lord Beaconsfield et s'exposer à des aventures dangereuses et coûteuses. Le Gouvernement Russe a préféré imiter le bon sens de Mr. Gladstone, non pour complaire aux susceptibilités Anglaises, mais par les mêmes motifs de politique rationnelle. Nous ne voyons donc pas pourquoi nous devrions compromettre des intérêts aussi sérieux, uniquement parce qu'il plaît aux socialists de tenir des meetings à Londres et au Gouvernement Anglais de les tolérer.

Inclosure 3 in No. 36.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of $\frac{\text{July}}{\text{August}}\ \frac{28}{9}$, 1881.

NOUS n'avons pas voulu apprécier le discours de Lord Hartington en réponse à l'interpellation de Sir Ashmead Bartlett d'après le compte-rendu télégraphique, sachant combien la télégraphie dénature souvent le sens des paroles.

Nous avons sous les yeux le texte de ce discours tel que nous l'avons reproduit hier et nous nous faisons un devoir de rendre justice à la modération, à la retenue, et à la convenance du langage de Lord Hartington. Il aurait certainement pu être plus explicite en réfutant les insanités mises en avant par Sir Ashmead Bartlett sur le compte de la politique Russe. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que le Marquis de Hartington parlait devant une assemblée habituée à entendre et à accueillir les accusations les plus odieuses au sujet de la Russie, et pour laquelle tout jugement impartial, toute parole bienveillante à l'égard de cette Puissance constituent une innovation hardie. Il faut donc tenir compte à l'orateur d'avoir eu le courage de sa modération.

Il n'y a qu'un point de fait que nous croyons devoir relever dans son discours—c'est celui qui a trait aux prétendus engagements contractés par le Gouvernement Russe au sujet de l'oasis des Tékés, engagements dont l'annexion de cette oasis serait une violation. Lord Hartington ne s'est pas catégoriquement prononcé sur ce point. Il a fait observer qu'on pourrait dire beaucoup dans un sens et dans l'autre.

Il aurait pu être plus explicite. Le Gouvernement Russe n'a jamais pris aucun engagement au sujet de Merv. Il n'avait pas à en prendre. Il a eu égard aux inquiétudes que le Cabinet de Londres témoignait sur ce point, et, loin de repousser ses interpellations, comme il en aurait eu incontestablement le droit, il a très franchement et très amicalement fait part de ses intentions, qu'il n'avait pas à cacher parce qu'elles étaient parfaitement loyales et dictées par ses légitimes intérêts. Il a toujours déclaré qu'il n'avait aucun projet ni aucun avantage à aller à Merv ni à y rester, mais que si les Merviens obligeaient nos troupes par leurs agressions à les poursuivre jusque-là et à détruire ce repaire de brigands, la Russie se réservait une complète liberté d'action.

Ces assurances ont été données lorsque les arrangements généraux pris par l'Angleterre et la Russie dans l'Asie-Centrale subsistaient encore dans leur lettre et dans leur esprit. Lorsque l'attitude agressive de Lord Beaconsfield en Europe et en Asie les eut déchirés, le Gouvernement Russe devait naturellement se considérer comme d'autant plus libre de ses actions; néanmoins ses vues au sujet de Merv n'ont point changé, parce qu'elles étaient fondées sur des considérations et des intérêts permanents qui ne pouvaient pas dépendre des convenances d'un Cabinet étranger.

Lord Hartington a reconnu lui-même "qu'il n'y a aucune relation entre l'entrée des troupes Anglaises dans l'Afghanistan et l'occupation par la Russie du territoire des Akhal-Téké." Cependant il a terminé son discours en affirmant "qu'une occu-

pation permanente de Kandahar par l'Angleterre aurait été une raison insuffisante pour le mouvement en avant de la Russie."

Ces deux assertions sont également vraies. Le Gouvernement Russe ne poursuit dans ces contrées d'autre intérêt que celui de la tranquillité et de la sécurité de ses frontières. Mais il est certain que cette tranquillité et cette sécurité peuvent exiger des mesures de précaution plus ou moins étendues, selon qu'elles se trouvent plus ou moins mises en péril par la situation politique dans son voisinage immédiat. Or, on conviendra que l'entrée des armées Anglaises à Kandahar et à Caboul, ainsi que l'esprit ouvertement hostile de la politique du Comte de Beaconsfield en Europe et en Asie, devaient accroître les légitimes appréhensions de la Russie du côté de la steppe Turcomane, où la présence d'officiers Anglais, et les facilités que les Tékés devaient trouver dans la proximité des troupes Britanniques pour s'armer, s'organiser, et s'instruire militairement, constituaient un danger très sérieux. Ce fut alors que le Gouvernement Russe délibéra sur les mesures de précaution à prendre et se décida, après mûre délibération, et par les motifs que nous avons exposés avant-hier, à entreprendre l'expédition confiée d'abord au Général Lazarew, puis au Général Tergoukassow, et enfin au Général Skobélew.

Nous l'avons dit, et nous le répétons, cette expédition dispendieuse et pénible, sans compensations probables, était imposée par la nécessité. Elle n'avait en vue que notre sécurité défensive. Mais c'était là un intérêt de premier ordre, devant lequel notre Gouvernement ne pouvait pas hésiter.

Lorsque les électeurs Anglais eurent condamné la politique aventureuse de Lord Beaconsfield, et que l'avènement de Mr. Gladstone eut ramené les relations de l'Angleterre et de la Russie, en Europe comme en Asie, dans une voie pacifique et amicale, la presse Anglaise crut pouvoir en inférer que l'évacuation de Caboul et de Kandahar par les Anglais amènerait le Gouvernement Russe à renoncer à l'expédition projetée dans la steppe. Ces conclusions étaient erronées. Il ne dépendait pas du Gouvernement Russe d'abandonner ce projet. D'abord il lui était impossible de rester sous le coup de l'insuccès des opérations du Général Lazarew. Quiconque connaît les Asiates sait fort bien qu'ils ne respectent que la force. Le prestige de la Russie aurait été irrévocablement détruit, les Tékés enhardis, la sécurité de nos possessions en Asie sérieusement menacée. Il fallait donc absolument infliger aux Turcomans une leçon sévère. Notre Gouvernement n'a pas caché cette nécessité au Cabinet Anglais, qui l'a parfaitement comprise.

Quant aux résultats possibles de l'expédition, il n'a pris, et n'avait à prendre, aucun engagement. Il a renouvelé l'assurance qu'il n'était guidé par aucune pensée hostile à l'Angleterre, que quant à Merv, ses intentions n'avaient pas changé, et qu'il n'irait jusque-là, si les Merviens l'y forçaient par leurs agressions; il ne cacha pas que la présence et la conduite des officiers Anglais qui excitaient et dirigeaient les Merviens était de nature à rendre cette éventualité inévitable. Il déclara que son seul but était d'établir sur des bases solides la sécurité des possessions Russes dans ces contrées, afin de ne pas se trouver dans le cas de renouveler périodiquement des expéditions ruineuses, sans résultats durables, et qui seraient toujours à recommencer. Les mesures propres à réaliser ce but dépendaient évidemment de l'issue de la campagne, et de ce que le Commandant-en-chef rapporterait de la situation de ces contrées encore inconnues. Mais ce but, la Russie était résolue à l'atteindre complètement et à tout prix. C'était son devoir et son droit.

Tel a été le sens des déclarations faites par notre Gouvernement. Elles étaient parfaitement honnêtes et loyales, dictées par le simple bon sens; ses intentions ne pouvaient pas être autres. Il n'en a fait aucun mystère, il n'en a pas dévié, et n'en déviera pas. Cela n'empêche nullement les égards dus aux intérêts d'un Gouvernement qui se montre animé de sentiments amicaux et pacifiques, ni les ménagements que réclame sa position particulière. Ces bons procédés réciproques sont nécessaires au maintien des relations de bonne intelligence avantageuses aux deux pays. Ils sont parfaitement compatible avec le maintien et la défense de leurs intérêts respectifs, qui ne sont nullement inconciliables du moment où ils sont appréciés et traités de part et d'autre dans un esprit d'équité et de bon vouloir mutuel.

Nous sommes persuadés qu'il en sera ainsi et qu'il en résultera en définitive, non seulement la cessation d'un antagonisme fatal qui n'a pas de raison d'être, mais encore la conviction d'une complète solidarité.

Quant aux insanités de Sir Ashmead Bartlett, nous n'avons rien à en dire. Il est triste de voir de pareilles diatribes outrageuses envers une grande nation, débitées dans une assemblée aussi respectable que la Chambre des Communes. L'Angleterre a toujours eu ses originaux, mais la politique n'est pas le terrain convenable pour de

semblables excentricités, et Lord Hartington les a justement appréciées en ne les prenant pas au sérieux.

No. 37.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received August 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 17, 1881.*

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the $\frac{2nd}{14th}$ instant, in a leading article, makes the following remarks with reference to the transformation of the Transcaspian military section into a distinct administrative region, and to which I have the honour of calling your Lordship's attention:—

"We will not discuss the administrative partition of the region, so extensive in area and so thinly populated, as in all probability further modifications in respect to its government will be introduced. We may, however, mention that, according to current reports, it is intended to form several battalions of the line in the new region. The head-quarters of General Röhrberg, the Commander of the troops and Governor of the region, have been transferred to Askabad, which was done at the suggestion of General Skobeleff, who considered that, in view of the dangerous proximity of Merv, and in order to follow the movements of the Tékés, the Chief of the region should reside at one of the advanced points. A large fort has been constructed at Askabad capable of accommodating 3,000 men, and in all probability several intermediate forts will be erected. A brigade of infantry and one of cavalry, together with a large number of guns, have been left, for the purpose of satisfying the military necessities of the region.

"Thus, with the establishment of central military departments of all branches, as well as of administrative Courts, for dealing with the requirements of the native population in legal and other respects, and with the completion of 200 versts of railway, the Transcaspian region loses its former comparative insignificance in pecuniary and administrative respects, seeing especially that the cost involved in the occupation of the region will amount annually to several millions of roubles.

"Assuming that the oasis lately annexed by us commences at Bami and terminates at Gowars (north-east of Askabad), its entire length may be calculated at 180 versts, with a population of 60,000 inhabitants. These figures are approximate, as the maps, drawn up on the basis of recent topographical surveys, contain no information as to the numerical strength of the population. For the same reason we are unable to define the new mountain frontier with the Persian provinces of Budjunur, Kuchan, and Khorassan, although a definite delimitation of the frontier with Khorassan possesses special interest and importance for Russia. It is to be hoped, however, that the delimitation will be effected with all due regard to Russian interests, a careful survey having been made by General Skobeleff, after the termination of military operations, of the country along the whole of the Kopet-Dagh range from Lufti-Abata to Bami."

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 38.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received September 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September 18, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, for your Lordships' information, a statement extracted from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day, according to which the military Trans-Caspian railway is completed, the terminus being Kizil-Arvat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of September $\frac{6}{18}$, 1881.

ON télégraphie de Krasnovodsk à "L'Invalide Russe" que le chemin de fer militaire de la Trans-Caspienne est terminé, les rails ayant été posés jusqu'à la station de Kizil-Arvat, qui en forme l'extrémité.

No. 39.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(Received September 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September 22, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a translation from the St. Petersburgh Russian "Gazette," detailing the Russian troops in the Akhal Téké oasis, to which I beg to call your Lordship's attention.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Extract from the "St. Petersburgh Gazette" of September $\frac{3}{15}$, 1881.

(Translation.)

THE "St. Petersburgh Gazette" of the $\frac{3rd}{15th}$ September, 1881, gives the following account of the number of Russian troops, &c., in the Akhal Téké oasis:—

"For a long time the Russian press has not contained any information respecting the troops stationed in the Trans-Caspian region, nor of the existing state of things in the newly-acquired Akhal Téké oasis, notwithstanding that this region was but recently the object of great interest. At present all the troops of General Skobeleff's detachment have been sent back to the Caucasus, and only a comparatively insignificant force is now stationed in the Trans-Caspian region. This force consists of one brigade of the 19th Division, commanded by Major-General Count Borch, and is composed of the Stavropol and Kryni regiments; of the Attaman regiment of Cossacks; of two sotnias of the Labinsky regiment of Cossacks; of four batteries of the 19th brigade of artillery (Colonel Heintz, commander); of the 6th mountain battery of the 21st artillery brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel Bobrikoff in command), and of the 2nd company of the 1st Sapper Battalion of the Caucasus.

"The Military Governor of the Trans-Caspian region is Lieutenant-General Rehrberg, and Colonel Baron Aminoff, of the Etat-Major, is the chief of his staff. The artillery is commanded by Colonel Heintz, commander of the 4th battery of the 21st brigade. The military head-quarters and administrative centre of the region are at Askabad, at which place are also concentrated the commissariat and military stores, as are also the artillery park and hospital.

"Since the capture of Geuk-Tépé, the conquered region has been in a state of complete tranquillity. The Tékés have apparently become reconciled to the new condition of things, and with the exception of a few have returned to their Settlements, resumed their peaceful occupations, and commenced trading with the garrisons of the fortified posts. Askabad is the military *point d'appui* in the Téké oasis. Its earthworks have been completed, but their extension is at present contemplated. Geuk-Tépé, the former Akhal stronghold, has been abandoned owing to its great size necessitating the maintenance of a large garrison for its occupation, as also in consequence of its unhealthiness arising from the poisonous exhalations emitted by the human bodies and remains of animals killed during the siege, and remaining unburied within and outside its walls. A new and smaller fortification has been erected at a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ versts from Geuk-Tépé, in the Hermav defile. Among other fortifications may be mentioned those of Kizil-Arvat, Bendessen Duz-ulum, Chat, and lastly, Mikhailofsky fort, Tchikishlar, and Krasnovodsk. As regards the railway, its construction has been extended from Mikhailofsky to Kizil-Arvat, and regular railway traffic is maintained along this distance. At present there is no intention of pushing on the construction of the railway beyond the above point. From Kizil-Arvat to Askabad, and from Bami to Tchikishlar, the roads have been so improved that they are easily traversed by wheeled vehicles. The troops stationed in the region are distributed as follows:—

"Askabad is occupied by the Stavropol regiment, the 4th battery of the 19th brigade, the sappers, and the 2nd and 3rd sotnias of the Attaman Cossack regiment. The Krym regiment occupies the Attrek and Mikhailofsky lines; the 6th mountain battery is distributed among the different forts. The 2nd sotnia of the Labinsky Cossack regiment is stationed at Chat, Duz-ulum, and Hodja-Kala. The 5th sotnia of the Attaman regiment is quartered at Bezmein. The 1st sotnia of the same regiment is at Kizil-Arvat. Lastly, the 4th sotnia of the Attaman regiment occupies the Chuli defile, on the Persian frontier, at a distance of 40 versts from Askabad. All the troops are

provisioned partly from Persian territory and partly by the Tékés. Stores that cannot be obtained on the spot are forwarded from the Caucasus, their transport from Mikhailofsky occupying from four to six days.

"The sanitary condition of the troops at the present moment is sufficiently satisfactory; in the Téké oasis it is very good. As regards the wounded soldiers left behind in the local hospitals, those that survived have all been transported to the Caucasus. It is a curious fact that all the wounded officers that were not treated by the medical *personnel* of the Red Cross died in hospital, notwithstanding that many of them were but slightly injured. Nearly all cases involving amputation terminated fatally. The medical branch is in a very unsatisfactory condition, the best surgeons having left the country. The Trans-Caspian region has not yet been properly organized. It is, however, intended to divide it into three districts:—

"1. The Geuk-Tépé district, which will include the extent of country from Bami to Askabad. The latter will be the chief town of the district.

"2. The Attrek district, from Chekishler to Bami, with Duz-ulum for its chief town; and lastly—

"3. Krasnovodsk, which will be constituted out of the present Kradnovodsk and Mangyshliak circuits. This district will stretch from Krasnovodsk to Aleksandrofsk, and thence to Bami. Krasnovodsk will be its chief town."

No. 40.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 3.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, August* 24, 1881.

AT an interview which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 20th instant I inquired if any progress had been made with respect to the settlement of the Russo-Persian boundary in Khorassan. His Excellency replied that negotiations had not yet commenced with that object, and that the Russian Minister had made no communication to him lately on the subject. He was aware, he said, that Russian officers had been engaged for several months in making surveys in various districts within the Persian territory adjacent to the frontier, and he believed that their work was now approaching completion, but with the exception of the tract of country lying between the Kopet Dagh and the Attrek River near Boojnoord and Kuchan, he was unable to define accurately the districts where the surveys had been made.

No. 41.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 3.)

My Lord, *Tehran, September* 1, 1881.

MR. WYNDHAM, in his despatch of the 20th July, reports a statement made to him by Baron Jomini in the course of conversation respecting the Russo-Persian frontier, that there was only one town called Sarakhs, and that it was a disputed point as to whether it was a Persian town or not.

I am aware that in maps published by the Russian Government at St. Petersburgh in 1823 Sarakhs was excluded from the Persian territory, but there cannot be the slightest doubt that it belongs to Persia as much as Kelat or Kuchan, or any other frontier town governed by Persian officials and held by Persian troops.

The present fort or town of Sarakhs was built by the Persians, and it has remained continuously in their possession, garrisoned by Persian soldiers for the last twenty-five years. The garrison now consists of 400 regular infantry and six guns, and for many years the force maintained there has seldom been reduced below this number.

By permission of the Persian Government the Tékés who now occupy Merv, when migrating from Akhal, were allowed for a time to settle on the Tejjen and Sarakhs lands, but their presence there having been found inconvenient they were expelled in 1857-58, when they proceeded to Merv and dispossessed the Saryk and Salar Turkomans of that territory which was then in their occupation.

The Persians had previously constructed a fort which they called Sarakhs on the right bank of the Tejjen River, near the site of the present town.

The position had not been well selected, being too much exposed to Turkoman attack, and it was therefore destroyed by order of the Persian Government, who then caused the

present fort to be built on the left bank of the river, on the road from Meshed to Merv, and half way between the two places.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 42.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 10.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 4, 1881.

THE "Novosti" newspaper of the 21st September / 3rd October reproduces the following account from the "Baku Intelligence" respecting the state of affairs at Askabad:—

"Russian activity at Askabad is manifesting itself by the construction of various buildings for quartering troops, the soldiery being employed in erecting the buildings. An officer has arrived at Baku charged with the commission of purchasing various fittings for 300 huts. A small town is being formed out of the new settlement, which now occupies a considerable portion of Askabad. The Téké quarter, with its purely native population, is still nearly deserted, and is divided from the Russian settlement by a rivulet. The Tékés are gradually returning to their old habitations and plots of land, which they generally find occupied by the Russians. Compensation is, in most cases, given, and they settle elsewhere. The Tékés continue to repose confidence in the Russian authorities, willingly seek the advice of the military surgeon, and even enter Russian hospitals for treatment. They show great respect and liking for the Russian officers, who treat them with kindness and humanity; towards the soldiers, however, they show great dislike, owing to the harsh character of the latter, and the recent cruel experience of their fighting powers.

"The Tékés are a tractable people, and now that they are humiliated, impoverished, and destitute, anything may be done with them. The Persians, perceiving that their warlike neighbours are unarmed, and remembering the sufferings they endured at Téké hands, are growing more and more daring. Attacks and armed raids occur from time to time. A herd of 500 camels belonging to the Tékés was recently driven off by the Persians. The Tékés readily engage in the work of constructing forts, and sometimes as many as 400 work together. They are good workmen with the shovel, but do not understand carpentering, masonry, &c."

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 43.

Mr. Wyndham to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 8, 1881.

ACCORDING to the "Baku Intelligence," the Trans-Caspian Military Railway will soon be purchased by a Russian firm which has extensive business transactions in the Trans-Caspian and the Caucasus. It is not intended to continue the railway beyond Kizil-Arvat, but a project exists to construct a tramway as far as Bami, which would leave only 180 versts of post-road to Askabad. This journey is now divided into four stages. There is a small fortified post at each station, and houses are kept there for the use of Government officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH WYNDHAM.

No. 44.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 20, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Bami, dated the 26th September / 8th October, states that a deputation, consisting of nineteen Merv Elders, has arrived at

Askabad. The deputation is said to be charged with the presentation of a letter from Baba Khan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 45.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 20, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Consul Michell of an article published in the "Invalide Russe" on the $\frac{4}{16}$th instant, giving the result of an analysis which has been made of the well and river waters in the Trans-Caspian region.

The waters thus tested are stated to be unfit for consumption, and from their hardness to be unsuitable for use in steam boilers, and for other technical purposes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of October $\frac{4}{16}$, 1881.

(Translation from the Russian.)

BY order of the Military Medical Inspector of the Caucasus, a chemical analysis has been made by Dr. Otten of the water in the rivers and wells of the Trans-Caspian region. In order to effect this analysis ten samples were taken from the Rivers Sumbar, Chandyr, Attrek, and the Karadji-Batyr and Chikishliar wells. The river water was found to be transparent, colourless, and without odour, of a saline taste, and with traces of alkali; the water from the wells of Karadji-Batyr was of a yellow colour, unpleasant to the taste, with a smell of sulphuric hydrogen gas, and showed a sediment of dark brown ferriferous clay; the water from the wells of Chikishliar was transparent, colourless, and without smell, of a bitter saline taste, and also showed traces of alkali. On comparing the analyzed water with water from the Caspian Sea, the influence of the latter on the subsoil waters was clearly observed. Although the influence of the sea water on the wells of Chikishliar is indisputable, yet it varies in degree. The water tested in the Trans-Caspian region was found to be entirely unfit for consumption and cooking purposes. The proportion of sulphuric acid, alkaline metals, and particularly of chlorides, exceeds the limits prescribed by science for wholesome water in sanitary respects. Owing also to the considerable hardness of the water, it is unsuitable for technical purposes, *i.e.*, supplying steam boilers and for washing purposes.

October $\frac{6}{18}$, 1881.

No. 46.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 31, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a correspondent of the "Baku Intelligence" gives the following account of a Turkoman deputation which recently arrived at Askabad from Merv:—

"After the fall of Geuk-Tépé many Akhal Téké Turkomans fled to Merv. They are now returning gradually to their old quarters, and it is expected that large numbers will return after the visit of the deputation. The well-known Tykma Sirdar, who met with such good treatment at the hands of the Russian Government, and was received into the Russian military service, made a journey to Merv and persuaded many of the Akhal Tékés to return to their homes. A number of these Turkomans returned with him, and they were accompanied by a deputation of independent Merv Tékés, whose object was to express the friendly feelings they entertained towards Russia; in other words, their object was purely deplomatic. The deputation, which consisted of fifty of the most notable Merv Chiefs, arrived at Askabad on the $\frac{3rd}{15th}$ September, and remained only five or six days. The Merv guests received a most

cordial reception, being liberally entertained, and on departing the more influential received presents of rich robes, while others received presents of money. From Askabad the deputation proceeded to Persia, from whence it is now returning to Merv. The Merv Turkomans were well received by the Persian authorities, but they remain better pleased with the reception and treatment which they received from the Russians. The stay of the deputation at Askabad was very short, owing to the impending departure of General Röhrberg to the Perso-Turkoman frontier, with the object of effecting an accurate delimitation of the same. Of course, it is impossible to be guided in this task by what existed formerly; if the Persian Government considered this or that line as their frontier, such a frontier was imaginary, inasmuch as no line of demarcation, excepting it were a river, or at least a Chinese wall, was recognized by their Téké neighbours, whose only frontier was where they were unable to penetrate on their swift horses. Now, however, the question must be settled differently, and a definite frontier-line must be established. General Röhrberg's journey partakes of the character of a preliminary survey, as Persia has not sent a Representative to the frontier."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 47.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 31, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith translation of an extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of the $\frac{1}{2}\frac{5}{7}$th instant, mentioning a report that the question of the Russo-Persian frontier in the Transcaspian region has been reopened, and expressing the hope that its speedy settlement will put an end to the robberies now committed by Persian bandits.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 47.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of October $\frac{15}{27}$, 1881.

(Translation.)

RUSSO-PERSIAN FRONTIER IN THE TRANSCASPIAN REGION.—It is reported that the question of the Russo-Persian frontier in the Transcaspian region, which was suspended owing to the recent events in Afghanistan, has been reopened. It is hoped by a speedy settlement of this question to put an end for the future to the pillage engaged in on the frontier by bands of Persian robbers.

M. Zinovieff, the Russian Minister at Tehran, has represented to the Persian Government the necessity of instructing the frontier authorities to exert themselves in stopping these raids on Russian territory.

B. B. R. A. S.

Not to be kept more than days

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE respecting Affairs in Central Asia.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 4 (1881).

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1882).

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF CENTRAL ASIA.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1882.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.
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Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Central Asia.

No. 1.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 24.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, September* 28, 1881.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has been informed that the Russian Minister has now received instructions to commence negotiations with the Persian Government for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian boundary in Khorassan, and that in the course of a few days M. Zinoview will address him on the subject, and explain the views of his Government in respect to the Attrek and Akhal territory. His Excellency, when he mentioned this to me, said he had reported the circumstances to the Shah, and His Majesty had repeated the instructions he had formerly given, that the ground which Persia should maintain in this discussion was that all territory not hitherto actually occupied by Akhal Turkomans belonged to Khorassan, and must, therefore, be considered an integral part of the Persian dominions.

No. 2.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 22, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, copy of a letter addressed to me by Her Majesty's Consul in this city, to the effect that the country between Kizil-Arvat and Askabad has been surveyed, with a view to continuing the construction of the railway from the former place to the latter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Consul Michell to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *St. Petersburgh, November* 18, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have been informed by a Russian officer, who is employed in the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway from Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat, that a careful survey of the line of country by a staff of engineers under the direction of M. Uskevitch, with a view to the construction of that line from the latter point to Askabad, has been completed. The accomplishment of the contemplated prolongation of the railway, extending as it does over a distance of 220 versts (equal to about 146 miles), is said to present no great physical obstacles; the only difficulties which it is expected will be encountered during the completion and maintenance of the line will be those proceeding from swollen mountain torrents bringing down at certain seasons of the year a considerable body of water.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. MICHELL.

No. 3.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 23, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to a letter published in the "Moscow Gazette" of the $\frac{6}{20}$th November, General Rohrberg, the Chief of the Trans-Caspian region, has already succeeded in erecting strong forts at Askabad, and the place has assumed the appearance of an influential town in commercial as well as in other respects. General Rohrberg is said to be exercising great care and patience in the administration of the region. There is an almost entire absence of criminal offences at Askabad; only two Tékés have been arrested, one for horse-stealing, and the other for attempting to carry off a Téke woman.

Owing to there being no supply of provisions from Persia, considerable difficulty is experienced in victualling the Russian detachment. The Tékés are also in want of grain, and are about to equip a caravan to proceed to Persia with the object of purchasing grain.

As regards the inadequate fresh water supply of the region, the writer states that General Gluckhofsky is descending from the Oxus along the Uzboi, or ancient bed, of which he is making a survey. A company of Turkestan soldiers will accompany the General as far as the wells of Izdy, where he will be met by a detachment from the Trans-Caspian region. General Gluckhofsky, it is said, will extend his survey to the Backhan Bay of the Caspian Sea.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 4.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 23, 1881.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a correspondent, writing to the "Moscow Gazette" of the $\frac{9th}{21st}$ November, points out the advantages which Russia will derive from the Trans-Caspian Railway, both in commercial and military respects. The account states that several Russian merchants have commenced to send Russian manufactured goods to Askabad. The various advantages which this road presents are summed up as follows:—

1. The railway minimizes the obstacles presented by 150 versts of barren and waterless waste in the transport of troops.

2. Rich deposits of naphtha have been discovered in the vicinity, which circumstance must develop the industry of the country, and reduce the cost of maintaining the railroad.

3. The connection of the Caspian with the Téké Oasis affords the possibility of trading with the inhabitants.

4. On the same grounds, it will develop Russia's trade with Khorassan by way of the Caspian Sea.

5. It will obviate for a long time, if not altogether, the necessity of new expeditions which cost the Government so much money, and allow of only a small force being maintained in the conquered region.

6. It must stimulate Russia's trade with Khiva, as it presents the shortest and safest route from Russia to Khiva, and renders it the most profitable.

7. Without presuming to penetrate too far into the future, it may be said that this railroad is the first step towards the accomplishment of direct railway communication with India.

The whole length of the railway is 217 versts (equal to about 144 miles).

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 5.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.

(Substance received by telegraph, December 15.)

My Lord, *Tehran, December* 1[illegible], 1881.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed me that his negotiations with the Russian Minister on the subject of the Akhal-Khorassan boundary question are likely to be concluded in a few days, the points upon which a difference of opinion existed between M. Zinoview and himself having now been arranged to the satisfaction of the Persian Government.

The line of frontier which his Excellency described to me as now agreed upon does not differ very materially from that proposed by the Persian Government. Following the course of the Attrek River from the Caspian to Chat, it proceeds thence to Khojeh Kala on the Sombar River, thus placing Kari Kala in the possession of Russia. It is then carried along the hills, passing about 20 miles south of Geok-Tépé and 7 miles south of Askabad, to near the village of Baba Dormez, which is situated 20 miles to the east of Gavers.

The district of Germab and Kilkillab is to be evacuated by Persia, Russia having agreed to the conditions proposed by the Shah in respect to its cession. For this concession, and for the surrender of her claim on Kari Kala, Persia is compensated by the withdrawal by Russia of the claim advanced to the Kelteh Chenar district, and by the adoption of the present line of frontier in substitution for that claimed under the 1869 agreement, which would have made the course of the Attrek up to Kuchan the boundary between their respective territories.

Besides the above stipulations with regard to the frontier, some other points have been discussed and agreed upon. Persia is to prevent the sale of arms from this country to the Turkomans, and engages not to permit any interference on the part of her subjects with the streams which flow from the Persian territory into Akhal, and both parties engage to surrender fugitives when required to do so.

The Russian Minister has also proposed that Persia should enter into an arrangement for the construction of a waggon-road from the Akhal frontier to Kuchan and Meshed, and this question is under consideration.

After the signature of the Treaty containing these stipulations and defining generally the line of frontier, officers will be appointed by Persia and Russia to proceed to the Akhal border, and there complete the demarcation of the frontier in accordance with the basis agreed upon in Tehran.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 6.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 16, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Turkestan Gazette" of the $\frac{27\text{th October}}{8\text{th November}}$, 1881, publishes the following information :—

"On the $\frac{9\text{th}}{21\text{st}}$ September Tykma Sirdar, one of the most influential Akhal Téké Chiefs, returned from Merv to Askabad. He was accompanied by twenty-four Merv Elders and a party of 110 Mervites. It is reported that the Toktamish and other tribes of Merv Turkomans have decided to seek the protection of Russia through the medium of the Khan of Khiva, whither they are sending twenty-four Elders.

"The Russian soldier Kidaieff, who was taken prisoner by the Tékés in 1873, had been released from captivity, which fact he himself communicates in a letter to Askabad; by his own desire he will return home by way of Khiva. Traders from Merv are arriving at Askabad with sheep and local products. Tykma Sirdar asserts that the whole population of Akhal are returning, but in an extremely destitute condition, sometimes on foot. As a matter of fact, small parties of Tékés are daily arriving in the territory. The Tékés have all left Merv, where only a few families remain. Maktum Kuli Khan has not arrived; he preferred to go to Khiva, and there make his submission to the Russians. Independent of the Merv Representatives, a deputation consisting of twenty-two Aksakals arrived at Askabad on the $\frac{9\text{th}}{21\text{st}}$ September, bearing a letter from Baba Khan of Merv and Muroup Khan; a further deputation of twenty-one men from the Toktamish tribe has

also arrived. All three letters express submission, and the two latter announce the dispatch by way of Khiva of twenty-four Elders who will declare submission to the Russian Government, and who are escortiug Kidaieff."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 7.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 4, 2·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, January* 4, 1882.

RUSSO-PERSIAN Treaty with regard to Akhal-Khorassan boundary has been signed by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Russian Minister. It contains nine Articles, as follows:—

I. Defines line of frontier, as described in my telegram of the 15th ultimo.

II. Provides for appointment of Commissioners to trace boundary in detail, in accordance with basis agreed upon in Article I.

III. Persia cedes Germab and Kilkilab to Russia, who engages not to construct fortifications or allow Téké-Turkomans to reside in these districts.

IV. Persia engages not to interfere with water supply flowing to Akhal from her territory. With this object, she engages that number of villages and extent of land now under cultivation there shall not be increased, and will appoint agents to give effect to this stipulation.

V. To encourage trade between respective territories, Persia agreeing to make such arrangements with reference to waggon-roads as may be for interest of both countries.

VI. Persia and Russia engage not to allow arms to be supplied to Turkomans.

VII. Russia has right to place agents in Persian frontier towns to communicate with authorities in matters connected with maintenance of order on frontier.

VIII. Engagements in former Treaties to remain in full force.

(This provides for extradition of fugitives on both sides.)

IX. Exchange of ratifications within four months.

Translation of Treaty, which is in Russian and Persian, will be forwarded by messenger.

No. 8.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 10, 1882.)

My Lord, *Tehran, December* 15, 1881.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a copy of the map furnished by the Russian Minister here to the Persian Government, showing the lines of frontier claimed by Russia and that now agreed to by Mirza Saeed Khan and M. Zinoview.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 8.

Map.

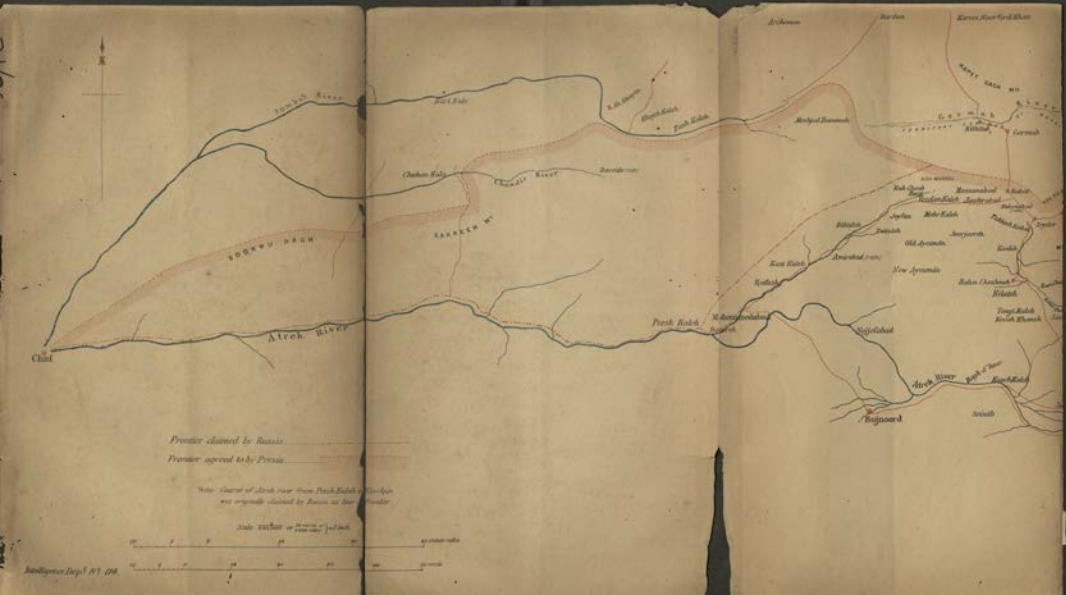
No. 9.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 7, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a letter to the Russian "Official Gazette," from its correspondent at Tehran, relating to the Convention recently signed in that city for defining the boundary between Persia and the Russian possessions in the Trans-Caspian region.

The letter claims credit to Russia for having given up a certain portion of territory which had been under Russian sway, but which was inhabited by Persians, and asserts that the annexation of Persian territory was never contemplated by Russia.


N
Sumbuk River
Sooruu Dagh
Atrek River
Chat
Kara Kala
Chaudir River
Garakem Mt
Fresh Kalah
Archman
Bardan
Kurun Mountain
Kizzil Gash Mt
Kizzilgaya
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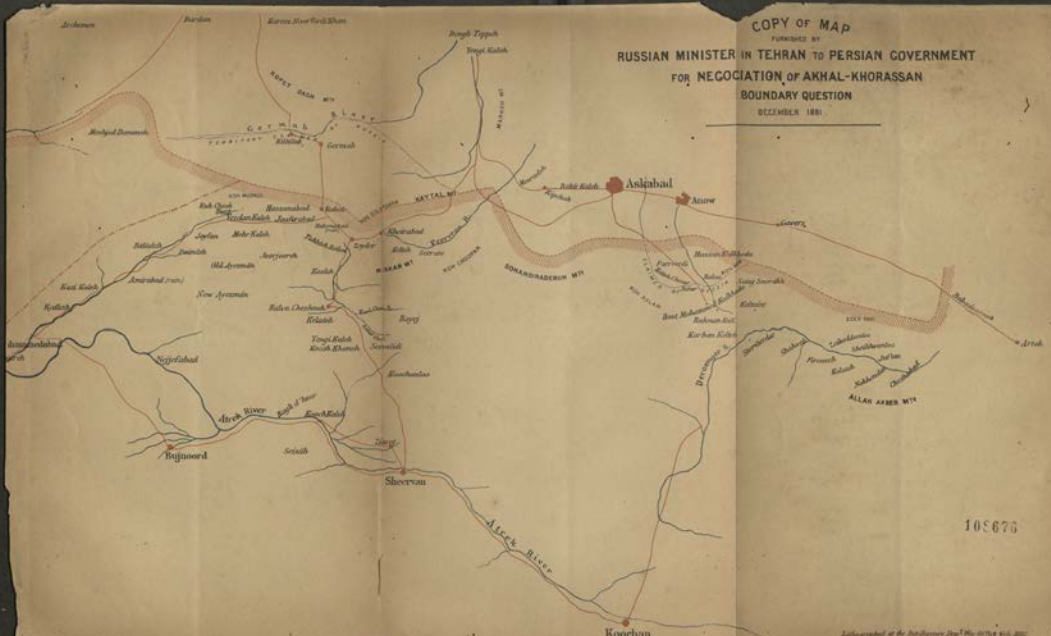
COPY OF MAP
FURNISHED BY
RUSSIAN MINISTER IN TEHRAN TO PERSIAN GOVERNMENT
FOR NEGOCIATION OF AKHAL-KHORASSAN
BOUNDARY QUESTION
DECEMBER 1881
Askabad
Annow
Germab
Kaytal Mt
Sonandraderun Mts
Allah Akbar Mts
Bujnoord
Sherevan
Atrek River
Koochan
109676

The letter goes on to explain the causes of the expedition against the Tékés, and the necessity of deciding upon the boundary with Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Extract from the "Official Gazette" of January 24 / February 5, 1882.

(Translation.)

TEHRAN.

(From the Correspondent of the "Official Gazette.")

IN the month of December last a Convention determining the new line of frontier in the Trans-Caspian region was signed at Tehran by M. Zinovieff, Privy Councillor, and Mirza Saïd Khan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Shah of Persia.

The negotiations entered into last autumn between the Russian Representative and the Persian Government terminated at last in satisfactory results for both parties.

According to an agreement concluded between Russia and Persia in 1869, the line of frontier between these countries on the east coast of the Caspian was to be formed by the course of the Atrek River.

In the seventh decade of this century the whole right bank of this river, as far as Chat, had already entirely fallen under Russian sway. At the further delimitation of the frontier however, we should have encountered serious difficulties, seeing that the Atrek in its upper course flows through localities inhabited by Persians. The annexation of any portion of Persian territory was never contemplated by Russia.

At the same time, the constant inroads of the Turkomans into our Trans-Caspian region, and the insecurity of the trade route from Krasnovodsk to Khiva, as is well known, induced our Government to dispatch expeditions against the Tékés, and so extend its power eastward. The recent expedition of General Skobeleff, which terminated in the complete subjugation of the Akhal-Téké Settlements, completely changed the aspect of affairs on our northern confines with Persia.

After the annexation to Russia of the Téké Oasis a precise delimitation of our frontier with Persia was necessary, and with this object negotiations with Persia were commenced last autumn. The Russian Government, however, did not claim from Persia any cession of the whole of the right bank of the Atrek. The new line of frontier adopted by both contracting Powers recedes from the Atrek already from Chat, and runs in a north-easterly direction, along a ridge of mountains and along the course of the Sambur. Russia merely confined herself to the retention of the oasis itself and the slopes of the mountains securing the oasis on the south, in which manner the frontier from the Sambur passes chiefly along the summits of the mountains, leaving to Persia the Firusé district. On reaching the valley of the Baba-Durmaz rivulet, the frontier runs northwards and intersects the road leading from Giaurs to Kuftabad, and then becomes lost in the sandy desert, leaving Atrek beyond Russian limits.

These are the most essential features of the Convention lately concluded. The remaining Articles of the Convention determine the method of carrying out its stipulations, and solve the boundary questions which must arise from the new order of things in the region. One of these Articles relates to commercial relations between the Trans-Caspian region and Khorassan.

The protraction of the negotiations which took place at Tehran on the subject of the frontier proceeded from the long-established conviction in Persia, that the whole of the Téké territory must belong to Persia. It was only recently that the Persian Government advanced a claim to the possession of Fort Kara-Kala, situated north-west of Askhabad and westward of Bami.

The Persian Government having at last become convinced that the new frontier does not in any way infringe its sovereign rights, agreed to accept the conditions proposed. It is to be hoped that the new Convention will serve as a guarantee for the development of the prosperity both of the Trans-Caspian region and of Khorassan.

No. 10.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 11, 1882, 4·35 P.M.

RUSSIAN newspaper "Golos" of the 3rd February states that new Russo-Persian frontier is traced 16 versts only short of Sarakhs, and that the Atek region is left by the Treaty to Persia for five years only, during which Persia undertakes to levy no taxes in said region.

No. 11.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 13, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 13, 1882.

STATEMENTS in Russian newspaper referred to in your Lordship's telegram of the 11th instant are, in my opinion, without foundation. According to Treaty communicated to me by the Persian Government, and forwarded to your Lordship by messenger on the 24th January, the Russian frontier is nearly 150 miles short of Sarakhs, and Minister for Foreign Affairs most positively states that this Treaty contains the only agreement come to with Russia in regard to frontier. His Excellency also distinctly affirms that question of Atek region was not discussed or brought forward during recent negotiations.

No. 12.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 17, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of an interesting Report of a survey made by M. Lessar, an Engineer of the Russian Government, of the country to the east and south-east of Kizil-Arvat, in the direction of Askabad and Sarakhs, with a view to a continuation of the line of railway, which now ends at Kizil-Arvat.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Abstract of Article from the "Novoe Vremya" of February $\frac{3}{15}$, 1882.

AT a meeting of the Russian Geographical Society held at St. Petersburgh on the $\frac{28\text{th January}}{6\text{th February}}$, 1882, M. Lessar, Government Engineer, made the following communication on the country recently traversed by him between Askabad and Sarakhs:—

As is well known, the railway was completed to Kizil-Arvat in the month of September last, and, although the question of extending it beyond that point through the oasis had not yet been finally settled, it was nevertheless decided to make surveys of the country in the direction of Askabad, and beyond to Sarakhs. Of special interest was that part of the country that lies between the above two points (270 versts, or about 180 miles), and extends beyond the limits of the Akhal Téké territory and along the Atek as far as Merv. The tranquil state of the region consequent on the lesson given by the Russian troops at Geuk-Tépé greatly facilitated surveying operations, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been attended with considerable risk.

M. Lessar, the Engineer, was escorted by 1 officer and 21 Cossacks, while the manual labour of levelling was performed by 9 Russian workmen and 2 overseers engaged for the purpose. The guide of the party was Ana-Geldy-Sirdar, formerly a robber chief, and the terror of the Persians and all caravans. The interpreters were a Kurd and a Kazan Tartar. No difficulty was experienced in changing Russian money for Persian krans (about 40 copecks) for the purpose of defraying travelling expenses, Russian bank notes being extensively circulated among Persian traders. At Askabad a Russian 100-rouble note commands a premium of from 2 to 3 roubles.

The work of surveying was commenced in the month of October. The line of route passes through the following principal settlements: Annair, Giaurs, Baba-Durmaz, Luftiabad, Kaakha, Hodjamed, Dushan, Chardei, Sarakhs. The whole of this road trends in a south-westerly direction,* and runs at a short distance from the Kopet-Dag and Kelat Mountains, and along an almost entirely flat country. It is only between Askabad and Annair that sandy hillocks of small elevation are encountered, and then these only extend for a distance of 300 fathoms. Between Annair and Giaurs the road extends along a very sloping declivity, and apparently it is only here, in M. Lessar's opinion, that embankments and earthworks for the railway would be found necessary. Annair is the only settlement in which traces of buildings with any pretensions to art are encountered; these consist of ruins on a large scale of a mosque, the walls, foundations, and minaret of which are in a state of dilapidation; the building is faced with glazed tiles of elegant design, which are in a good state of preservation.

While pursuing his journey, M. Lessar met with Téké caravans returning from Merv to the Akhal country, which they had been induced to do by the persuasions of Tykma Sirdar, and partly in consequence of the scarcity of water and available land for settlement in the Merv oasis. These Tékés, as also the inhabitants of the villages passed through, did not molest the Russian party; on the contrary, they gave M. Lessar and his escort a friendly reception, and seemed to be satisfied with the results of the recent campaign. Discontent was only evinced by the Rulers of the neighbouring districts, who, since the conquest of the Akhal Téké oasis, are no longer able to play the part of protectors of the northern frontiers of Persia, and consequently find their functions at an end.

Commencing from Baba-Durmaz, the road in some parts runs through localities overgrown with bushes. Ruined forts and watch-towers, erected for the purpose of serving as refuges against marauding parties, as also large artificial mounds, are frequently met with. The opinion expressed by Vambéry that these mounds mark the burying-places of celebrated warriors and Sirdars is not confirmed by the natives. The latter point out special tombs of this description, and say that the mounds were raised in remote times by an unknown race. M. Lessar states that the mounds are 7, and sometimes more, fathoms high, of circular shape, and occasionally of elliptical form; they are also seen of a confused style of structure, having at times a diameter of 50 fathoms, and resembling in appearance the artificial mounds scattered over the central parts of North America. It must be supposed that these mounds were raised by a race that populated Central Asia before it was occupied by its present inhabitants.

Referring to the trade of the Atek, M. Lessar gives the following description of the bazaar of Luftiabad. This bazaar, he says, is considered the most important one in that part of the country. Besides provisions and fodder, all the shops in the bazaar contain raisins, nuts, sweets, rice, sugar, tea of inferior quality, and writing paper of Russian manufacture. As regards contents, one shop closely resembles all the others. Along the walls are hung in small bags hair and finger-nail dye, drugs, amulets for man and horse, and also small miscellaneous wares, such as looking-glasses, phials, apparently of Persian manufacture, &c.

Nearly the whole extent of country surveyed is extremely fertile, and abounds in game, such as wild boar, pheasants, &c.

Settlements occur frequently along the road, where they sometimes extend in triple line. The most considerable of these settlements is that of Kaakh, which consists of 600 habitations. The inhabitants are Aliélé Turkomans, who fled from Khiva after the occupation of that Khanate by the Russian troops. Generally speaking, the population is a mixed one, and of comparatively recent origin.

In consequence of a scarcity of water and an impoverishment of the land in Merv, the Tékés have been obliged to settle along the streams of the Atek, which take their rise in the Allah-Ekber Mountains. In some places the Persians attempt to levy taxes, and the Tékés, in return, have recourse to pillage. The claim of Persia to the Atek is a very doubtful one.

The food of the Tékés consists of well-prepared pillaus and of game; also of fermented camels' milk, melons, and water-melons. The Tékés use their fingers in conveying food to their mouths, but guests are provided with spoons. The unfavourable accounts given by Vambéry and O'Donovan of the diet of the natives are thus not in accordance with facts.

Between Hodjamed and Dushak the soil is much burrowed by porcupines, and large ant-hills abound.

Half-way between Chardei and Sarakhs the route is intersected by the road that leads

* The direction of the route from Kaakha to Sarakhs, entered on the map, from inquiries made on the spot as running from west to east, really deflects to the south-east; by point of compass the direction is 55° south-east

from Merv to Meshed. In this part of the country high mounds of sandy-argillaceous formation are frequently met with, and bushes of high growth cover the country.

Sarakhs is a large Persian fortress, and is occupied by a battalion of infantry numbering about 700 men, with 6 guns of ancient origin and in very bad condition. The artillerymen do not know how to serve the guns, and for this reason, as also for fear of attracting the attention of the Turkomans, the Commander of the fortress has, since the day of its construction, reserved his artillery fire. The fortifications are spread over a considerable extent, owing to the fields and gardens being situated within its walls. The Commander never ventures on any military expedition beyond the fortress, and when he does proceed to a distance of more than 5 versts beyond Askabad he always takes with him an escort of at least fifty men. The Sarakh Daria, which takes its rise in the Parapamiz, is generally dry all the year round. Sarakhs, therefore, draws its supply of water from wells and a canal that leads out of the Tedjend River.

The levels taken, both for the already constructed railway and of the line of country above described, show the non-existence of any elevation of the land from the Caspian. In the neighbourhood of Aidin the country is even lower in level by 2 fathoms than the Caspian. There is also no ground for assuming that the whole of this locality is the bed of an ancient river.

Judging from the character of the country traversed by M. Lessar, he is of opinion that, if levels were taken of the country between Khiva and Bokhara, many localities would be found in the Trans-Caspian desert (which formed in ancient times the bed of a sea) of lower level than that of the Caspian. This supposition leads M. Lessar to the conclusion that the Murgab and Tedjend did not flow into the ancient Oxus, but, like that river, into the Caspian, the shores of which at that period were in close proximity to these rivers.

After the completion of his interesting mission, M. Lessar returned to Askabad by way of Meshed and Mahmedabad.

St. Petersburgh, February 17, 1882.

No. 13.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 6.)

My Lord, *Tehran, January* 23, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, translation of the Akhal-Khorassan Boundary Treaty, lately concluded between Russia and Persia, as reported in my telegram of the 4th January.

This translation has been made from the Russian text by Mr. Stephen. Comparing it with the Persian version, I observe that the terms employed in Article V are not the same in both languages. In the Russian text it is stated that both Governments engage, with a view to the development of commercial intercourse between the Trans-Caspian province and Khorassan, to come to a mutually advantageous agreement for the construction of waggon roads between the above-mentioned provinces; whereas in the Persian version of this clause it is said that, in order to facilitate commercial operations between the Trans-Caspian provinces and that of Khorassan, the two Contracting Powers engage, as regards the construction of waggon roads for the transport of merchandize between the aforesaid countries, to make such arrangements as may be of mutual advantage to them.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed me that the Nasseer-ed-Dowleh, who was formerly employed in the Persian Foreign Office, and lately in the Ministry of Justice, will be named Commissioner under Article II of this Convention for the local demarcation of the line of frontier, on the basis agreed upon in Article I.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Convention respecting Russo-Persian Frontier, signed at Tehran, December $\frac{9}{21}$, 1881.

In the name of God the Almighty.

HIS Majesty the Shah of Persia and His Majesty the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, acknowledging the necessity of accurately defining the frontier of their

possessions east of the Caspian Sea, and of establishing therein security and tranquillity, have agreed to conclude a Convention for that purpose, and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

His Majesty the Shah of Persia, on the one hand, Mirza Said Khan, Moutemid-ul-Mulk, his Minister for Foreign Affairs;

His Majesty the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, on the other, Ivan Zenovief, his Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of His Majesty the Shah;

Who, having exchanged their respective full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following Articles:—

ARTICLE I.

The frontier-line between the possessions of the Russian Empire and Persia, east of the Caspian Sea, is fixed as follows:—

Beginning at the Hasan Kuli Gulf, the course of the River Atrek serves as the frontier as far as Chat. From Chat the frontier-line follows in a north-easterly direction the ridges of the Songou Dagh and Sagirim ranges, thence extending northward to the Chandir River, reaching the bed of that river at Tchakan Kale. From Tchakan Kale it runs in a northerly direction to the ridge of the mountains dividing the Chandir and Sumbar valleys, and extends along the ridge of these mountains in an easterly direction, descending to the bed of the Sumbar at the spot where the Ach-Agaian stream falls into it. From this point eastward the bed of the Sumbar marks the frontier as far as the ruins of Medjet Dainé. Thence the road to Durrun forms the frontier-line as far as the ridge of the Kopet Dagh, along the ridge of which the frontier extends south-eastward, but before reaching the upper part of the Giamab pass, turns to the south along the mountain heights dividing the valley of the Sumbar from the source of the Giamab. Thence taking a south-easterly direction across the summits of the Misino and Tchoubest mountains, it reaches the road from Giamab to Rabab, passing at a distance of 1 verst to the north of the latter spot. From this point the frontier-line runs along the ridge of the mountains as far as the summit of the Dalang mountain, whence, passing on the northern side of the village of Khairabad, it extends in a north-easterly direction as far as the boundaries of Geok Keital. From the boundaries of Geok Keital the frontier-line crosses to the gorge of the River Firuzé, intersecting that gorge on the northern side of the village of Firuzé. Thence the frontier-line takes a south-easterly direction to the summits of the mountain range, bounding on the south the valley, through which the road from Askabad to Firuzé passes, and runs along the crest of these mountains to the most easterly point of the range. From here the frontier-line crosses over to the northernmost summit of the Aselm range passing along its ridge in a south-easterly direction and then skirting round to the north of the village of Keltechinar, it runs to the point where the Ziri Kou and Kizil Dagh mountains join, extending thence south-eastward along the summits of the Ziri Kou range until it issues into the valley of the Baba Durmaz stream. It then takes a northerly direction, and reaches the oasis at the road from Gavars to Lutfabad, leaving the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the east.

ARTICLE II.

Whereas, in Article I of the present Convention, the principal points are indicated through which the frontier between the possessions of Russia and Persia is to pass, the High Contracting Parties are to appoint Special Commissioners, with a view of accurately tracing on the spot the frontier-line, and of erecting proper boundary-marks. The date and place of meeting of the said Commissioners shall be mutually agreed upon by the High Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE III.

Whereas, the forts of Giamab and Kulkulab, situated in the gorge through which the stream watering the soil of the Trans-Caspian province passes, lies to the north of the line which, in virtue of Article I of the present Convention, is to serve as the boundary between the territories of the two High Contracting Parties, the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage to evacuate the said forts within the space of one year from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Convention, but shall have the right during the said period to remove the inhabitants of Giamab and Kulkulab to within the Persian frontier, and to establish them there. On its part,

the Government of the Emperor of all the Russias engage not to erect fortifications in these said localities nor to establish any Turkoman families therein.

ARTICLE IV.

Whereas, the sources of the River Firuzé, as well as of other streams watering the soil of the Trans-Caspian province contiguous to the Persian frontier lie within the Persian territory, the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage, on no account whatever, to permit the establishment of fresh Settlements along the course of the said streams and rivulets from their sources to the point where they leave Persian territory, and not to extend the area of land at present under cultivation, and under no pretence whatever to turn off the water in larger quantities than is necessary for irrigating the fields now under cultivation within the Persian territory. With a view to the immediate observance and fulfilment of this stipulation the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage to appoint a sufficient number of competent Agents, and to subject any infringer thereof to severe punishment.

ARTICLE V.

With a view to the development of commercial intercourse between the Trans-Caspian province and Khorassan, both High Contracting Parties engage to come to a mutually advantageous agreement as soon as possible for the construction of waggon-roads suitable for commercial traffic between the above-mentioned provinces.

ARTICLE VI.

The Government of His Majesty the Shah of Persia engage to strictly prohibit the export from His Majesty's dominions along the whole extent of the frontier of the provinces of Asterabad and Khorassan, of all arms and war material, and likewise to adopt measures to prevent arms being supplied to the Turkomans residing in Persian territory. The Persian frontier authorities shall afford the most effective support to the Agents of the Imperial Russian Government, whose duty it shall be to watch that arms are not exported from the Persian territory, The Government of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, on its part, engage to prevent arms and war material being supplied from Russian territory to Turkomans living in Persia.

ARTICLE VII.

With a view to the observance and fulfilment of the stipulations of the present Convention, and in order to regulate the proceedings of the Turkomans residing on the Persian frontier, the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias shall have the right to nominate Agents to the frontier points of Persia. In all questions concerning the observance of order and tranquillity in the districts contiguous to the possessions of the High Contracting Parties, the appointed Agents will act as intermediaries in the relations between the Russian and Persian authorities.

ARTICLE VIII.

All engagements and stipulations contained in Treaties and Conventions concluded up to this time between the two High Contracting Parties shall remain in force.

ARTICLE IX.

The present Convention, done in duplicate, and signed by the Plenipotentiaries of both parties, who have affixed to it the seal of their arms, shall be confirmed and ratified by His Majesty the Shah of Persia and His Majesty the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias; the ratifications to be exchanged between the Plenipotentiaries of both parties at Tehran within the space of four months, or earlier, if possible.

Done at Tehran the 9th 21st December, 1881, which corresponds to the Mussulman date of the 29th Mucharem, 1299.

(Seal.) (Signed) IVAN ZENOVIEF.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1882.

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Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Asia.

No. 1.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 30, 1881, 7·15 P.M.

REPORTS have appeared in one or two newspapers here that the Turkomans at Merv have surrendered to the Russians. Has any intelligence reached you to that effect?

No. 2.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 31, 2·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, December* 31, 1881.

I HAVE no information of the surrender of the Merv Turkomans to Russia, nor has any such intelligence reached the Persian Government.

Communications appear, however, to have lately passed between the Turkomans and Russians with a view to submission or arrangement for future good conduct of the tribes; and it is reported that two of the late Koushed Khan's sons, with six other Chiefs, had gone to Akhal, and that result of their negotiations was not yet known.

Mr. Stephen is expected here in a few days. He will, no doubt, bring trustworthy and recent information of events in the Akhal country.

No. 3.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 16, 3·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, January* 16, 1882.

EYOUB KHAN is endeavouring to arrange for his being allowed to stay at Meshed till end of March.

No. 4.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 12, 1882.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram to Mr. Thomson No. 29 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to the "Novoe Vremya" of yesterday, a new deputation of Merv Elders will shortly proceed to the Russian head-quarters in the Transcaspian, the previous deputation, that newspaper states, having failed in its mission. It is added that the despatch of the new deputation was decided on by the Mervites themselves, and that Takhma Sirdar will have no connection with it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 5.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 25, 2·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, January* 25, 1882.

EYOUB KHAN refuses to go to Tehran. There is reason to suppose that he wishes to go to Bokhara.

No. 6.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 2, 1882.

IN conversation with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon I alluded to the friendly relations existing between the two countries, and remarked that they had rarely, if ever, been on a better footing. I could answer for Her Majesty's Government that they were animated by feelings of cordiality and goodwill towards that of Russia, and I believed that a similar disposition existed at St. Petersburgh. This fortunate condition of affairs, I thought, offered an opportunity which should not be neglected to arrive at an understanding upon any question which was capable in the future of becoming a subject of difference or suspicion. It was on this ground that I wished to suggest whether some agreement might not be come to as regards the policy and position of the two Powers in Asia, which should remove the jealousy with which, as he was aware, public opinion in this country was inclined to view the success and progress of the Russian arms in those regions. It would, in my opinion, be not merely an advantage for England and Russia themselves that such an agreement should be attained, but it would materially contribute to the tranquillity and civilization of the Asiatic States and populations that the two Governments should be understood to be acting harmoniously.

I said that the subject was one on which Prince Lobanow had himself spoken to me when first I had taken office, that it must presumably have often occupied his thoughts, and I asked his Excellency whether it occurred to him to suggest any means by which such an object could be furthered.

Prince Lobanow said he had no positive suggestion to make, but he added that he was under the impression that some agreement had at one time been come to on the subject.

I asked Prince Lobanow whether he referred to the agreement which had been the result of the discussions between Prince Gortchacow on the one side and Lord Clarendon and afterwards myself on the other.

Prince Lobanow said that that was what he meant.

I answered that that agreement was perfectly clear and satisfactory as far as it went; that it was as formal as anything could be which was not the subject of a Treaty or Convention; that I was not aware that it was open to any question. His own Government had very recently acknowledged its validity, and it had never occurred to Her Majesty's Government to question its force and binding effect at the present moment. But there were points which it did not touch, and details which it left unsettled, which it might be advantageous to make the subject of further arrangement.

One of these questions was the position of Persia. England and Russia were agreed in regarding the independence of that country as a matter of mutual interest. But a considerable portion of her frontier to the north-east still remained undefined, nor had she by herself the means of laying it down. We understood that the Russian Government had come to an arrangement with that of the Shah as to the line of frontier from the Caspian to a considerable distance eastward and south-eastward, as far, I believed, as a place named Baba-Dormuz. I wished to suggest that an agreement should also be come to between England, Russia, and Persia, for the settlement of the frontier now left undefined between Persia and the Turkoman country from this point, Baba-Dormuz, to the point where the Persian frontier meets that of Afghanistan in the neighbourhood of the Heri-Rud, and for its subsequent demarcation by English, Russian, and Persian officers.

I thought that something might be done with regard to the adjacent Afghan frontier.

Prince Lobanow said that he did not know the place to which I alluded; that he was not aware of any point of contestation between the Russian and the Persian Governments as to their respective frontiers, and at first sight it occurred to him that

they might consider that the definition of the Persian frontier had been pushed as far as was necessary or useful for the present, and that if in the future it became necessary to define further the boundary between Russia and Persia, it was a matter to be settled between the two conterminous States.

I said that it seemed to me that when two powerful countries were admitted to be jointly interested in maintaining the independence of a weak neighbouring State, it was difficult to argue that the settlement of the frontier of this latter State was a matter which interested only that one of the two Powers whose territories were actually contiguous.

We agreed to resume the conversation at a later date, and to consider what had passed as merely preliminary conversation.

You will not allude to it until you have further instructions.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 7.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 2, 1882.

IN the course of the conversation with the Russian Ambassador, which is reported in my immediately preceding despatch, I alluded to the speech recently made by General Skobeleff at a dinner at St. Petersburgh, of which accounts have appeared in the public press. I told Prince Lobanow that I did not attach undue importance to addresses made by officers at public dinners, but that the character of the General's statements was certainly calculated to excite the apprehensions of those who entertained suspicions of ambitious views on the part of Russia. This, I said, was not only the case with those who might be thought Russophobes in this country, but from the accounts I had read it appeared that the speech had also excited much comment on the continent.

Prince Lobanow entirely repudiated the sentiments to which General Skobeleff had given expression. He said that the speech was entirely without political significance—that the General was a good soldier, and as such would always obey the orders that were given him, but that he was no politician, and had no political authority.

I answered that I was quite ready to receive this assurance, but that the General was one of those good soldiers who, when in the field, did not always confine themselves to the limits of their instructions, but created the necessity of further advances which the Russian Government had often deplored.

I thought this an additional reason for coming to some more definite understanding as to frontier than at present existed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 8.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 30, 1882.

A TELEGRAM purporting to be from Tiflis, and dated the 13th instant, is published in the Russian newspaper "Golos," to the effect that the information given by the English newspapers that the garrison of Askabad would reach 8,000 men is erroneous. It states that, according to General Röhrberg, the number of troops now there is less than it was last spring at the time of the occupation of the town.

It adds that the information given by the Reuter Agency about an alleged movement of Russian troops in the direction of Merv is also without foundation, and that in the neighbourhood of Askabad a small military post only has been established to serve as a starting point for the surveys of a line of road between Kizil-Arvat, Askabad, and the provinces of the Khorassan.

It also states that General Röhrberg left Tiflis for St. Petersburgh on the 13th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 9.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 1, 1882.

THE "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day quotes two articles from Russian newspapers, one from the "Caucasus," and the other from the "Golos."

The former of these states that complete tranquillity now prevails in the Transcaspian region, that the transport of stores and the postal service between Kizil-Arvat and Askabad are carried on in perfect safety, and that the troops at the latter have been placed on a peace footing.

The "Golos" declares that the Merv Turkomans are now abstaining from all opposition to the new order of things, and recommends that the Government should devote itself to the development of commerce, making Askabad a commercial centre. It also advises Russian manufacturers to follow the example of their English rivals in making their cotton goods accord with the taste of the natives in the markets of Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 10.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 12, 1882, 5·30 P.M.

EYOUB is reported to be still on Afghan frontier and to be stirring up intrigues. It would be very mischievous if he were to get back to Herat. Persian Government are stated to be very slow about interning him.

No. 11.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 13, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 13, 1882.

I HAVE been constantly urging Persian Government to remove Eyoub Khan from Khorassan.

Repeated and strong telegrams have been sent to Prince-Governor, desiring him to expedite Eyoub's movements. Latter has now received money for travelling expenses, and Prince telegraphed on the 11th that he would leave speedily. Iskender Khan arrived here 8th instant.

No. 12.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 16, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 16, 1882.

EYOUB KHAN refuses to come to Tehran, and he is supposed to have made arrangements for admission to Russian territory, but he and other refugees now at Meshed may possibly attempt to re-enter Afghanistan.

I have applied to Persian Government for further peremptory orders for Eyoub's removal from Khorassan, and for the adoption of effectual measures to prevent his reaching Afghanistan. I have added that Persia would incur grave responsibility should he be allowed to cross the frontier.

No. 13.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 18, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 18, 1882.

AN autograph message from His Majesty the Shah, and instructions from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, have been sent by telegraph to Meshed, censuring local

authorities for their conduct with respect to Eyoub, and containing stringent orders for his dispatch to Tehran within two or three days, and for proper measures being taken to prevent his evasion on the road.

No. 14.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon by appointment. His Excellency told me that he had reported to his Government the substance of the conversation we had had on the 2nd instant on the policy of the two Governments in Asia, as reported in my despatch of that date.

Prince Lobanow said that he had told his Government that I had commenced by stating that the present good relations between Russia and England offered an opportunity, of which it was desirable to take advantage, for coming to some further understanding as to the position of the two countries in Central Asia; that he had thereupon suggested a renewal of the agreement formerly made with Prince Gortchacow by Lord Clarendon and me; that to this I had replied that I looked upon that agreement as still existing in full force, but that it left certain matters undecided which it would be well definitively to settle; and that I had finished by proposing a delimitation of the Persian frontier from Baba-Durmaz to a point in the neighbourhood of the Heri-Rud.

He had now received the reply of his Government. They acknowledged the continued validity of the agreement formerly entered into by Prince Gortchacow, by which Afghanistan was admitted to be beyond the sphere of Russian influence. That agreement was, however, as I had said, incomplete; and they were ready to supplement it by a settlement of the frontier of Afghanistan, from the point where it had been left undefined as far as Sarakhs.

To this I replied that several observations occurred to me at once in regard to such a proposal, but that I would reserve them until I had been able to examine the matter carefully, and was in a position to present him with my views in a more complete shape.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 15.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 8.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, March* 8, 1882.

WITH much difficulty Eyoub Khan has at length been induced to quit Khorassan. He left Meshed yesterday in charge of a Persian Colonel, who is directed to bring him to Tehran.

No. 16.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, March* 14, 1882.

IN the course of conversation this afternoon the Russian Ambassador alluded to the Central Asian question.

I reminded his Excellency that when at our last interview he had mentioned to me the counter-proposal of the Russian Government for a delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja-Saleh to Sarakhs, I had said that certain observations occurred to me at once in regard to it, but that I would reserve them until I could consider the matter thoroughly.

I had since, I said, been confirmed in my impression—and I found that it was entirely shared by the India Office and Indian Government—that the proposal did not in any way meet the requirements of the case.

It was acknowledged, I continued, not only by Her Majesty's Government, but

by that of Russia also, that it was desirable to avoid any contact or very close contiguity between the frontiers of the British and Russian possessions in Central Asia or of the native States under their immediate and direct influence. Russia, on her part, had shown considerable susceptibility in this respect in regard to the possible eventuality of an English occupation of Herat, while on our side Lord Derby, when Foreign Secretary, had equally expresssed the objections that would be felt here and in British India to an advance of the Russian arms to the immediate vicinity of the Afghan frontier.

During the last two years our movement had been in a retrograde direction. In this we had been influenced, as I was ready to admit, not by a deference to the wishes of Russia, but by political considerations of our own. Still, the fact remained. The Russian Government, on the contrary, had advanced far beyond what we had been led to expect from the assurances previously given to us. We now heard of a surveying party having proceeded beyond the Russian advanced positions as far as Sarakhs, and that point was mentioned by the Russian Government as the termination of a proposed delimitation of the Afghan frontier. It appeared to us that if the possession of Sarakhs were at any time to be arrived at by the Russian Government, it could not be necessary for the purposes which have hitherto been stated by them as their object.

In the meanwhile, the Government of India were placed in a position of considerable difficulty by the ambiguity of the Russian position. It was necessary for them to settle the whole question of their future relations with the Ameer, and it was natural and reasonable that they should desire to know on what footing they stood in regard to the intentions and claims of Russia, and for what eventualities they might have to provide.

I begged Prince Lobanow to believe that the matter was of serious importance, and that it was one which neither of the two Governments could afford to neglect.

Prince Lobanow said he had not very clearly understood what had been the object of my original proposal to him.

I told his Excellency that I had no hesitation in telling him frankly—for I believed it was in the interest of both countries—that our desire was to make an arrangement which should prevent any occasion or opportunity for a further advance of Russia towards Afghanistan. We believed that her present acquisitions were all that she could require for purposes of security. It had seemed to us that the interposition of a barrier, even though it were more of a moral than of a material character, by recognition of the territorial rights of Persia over the adjacent region to the south might take away the opening for a further progress of the Russian forces, which we believed to be deprecated at St. Petersburgh, though it might often be difficult under the circumstances to prevent it.

Prince Lobanow said he had understood that there had been at one time an attempt to agree upon a neutral zone between the possessions and dependencies of the two countries, and that this arrangement had been found to be impracticable. The Russian Government considered that Afghanistan should be an independent or semi-independent State, subject to English influence, and the country to the north of it, now under discussion, should remain a neutral territory, placed in a somewhat similar position with regard to Russia.

I told his Excellency that this view was new to me, and only observed how important it was that the Indian Government should clearly understand what the intentions of the Russian Government were.

Prince Lobanow agreed that it was not impossible, and certainly desirable, that we should come to some definite understanding.

I told his Excellency that if the negotiation could be pursued, I thought it would be very desirable to arrange a meeting between him, Lord Hartington, and myself, at which the details could be proposed and discussed.

No. 17.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, March* 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador came to the Foreign Office yesterday afternoon by appointment in order to meet Lord Hartington and me, and to resume with us jointly the discussion of the Central Asian question, which had hitherto been carried on between his Excellency and me alone.

Prince Lobanow began by requesting some further explanation of the proposal which I had already made to him at our previous interviews.

Lord Hartington, on my invitation, replied to his Excellency's inquiry. He stated that the recent advances of Russia on the north-eastern frontier of Persia were of a nature to cause serious uneasiness to the Ameer of Cabul, and had been noticed not without concern by the Government of India. The Ameer would think himself justified in requesting Her Majesty's Government to augment his subsidy, in order to provide against possible eventualities. It was possible, said Lord Hartington, that the extension of the Russian occupation as far as Baba-Durmaz had been necessary for the protection of the Russian possessions and means of communication from the brigandage of the Turkomans. But it was evident that the same grounds might be alleged for further advances beyond the point now reached, and even as far as Sarakhs or its vicinity. In that case the incursion of a band of Turkomans into Russian territory and its subsequent flight across the Afghan frontier might at any time suffice to produce serious difficulties between Russia and Afghanistan, or, in fact, between Russia and England, which had special relations with Afghanistan. It seemed therefore to be equally in the interest of Russia and of England that their two Governments should endeavour to prevent a contract so dangerous in its possible results.

The method which had suggested itself as a simple and obvious one was embodied in the proposal already made.

In the present state of affairs the Turkomans of Merv were the only tribes from which acts of aggression on Russian territory were to be apprehended. But unless they ventured through the desert these tribes could only reach the Russian frontier by one route, that which descends in a south-westerly direction from Merv to the neighbourhood of Sarakhs and thence turns to the north-west, following for some distance the course of the Tejend or the district known as the Atak at the base of the mountains. It seemed therefore possible to prevent such incursions by an arrangement between Russia and England to determine the limits of Persia towards the Steppe. We should in fact do no more than recognize, as forming part of the Shah's dominions, a territory to which he has an undoubted right, attaching to our recognition an obligation on the Persian Government to establish forts upon it, and to maintain in it a sufficient number of troops to bar effectually any hostile attempt on the part of the Turkomans.

The territory in question would comprise the whole of the cultivated tract between Baba-Durmaz and Sarakhs, including that lying on the banks of the Tejend.

Lord Hartington observed that the Persian Government would of course be invited to become a party to any arrangement that might be concluded between the two Governments, adding that the question of the Persian frontier on this side might no doubt be said to be one in which Russia and Persia were primarily interested; but that it had also a practical interest for Russia and England for the reasons which had formerly been acknowledged by both Governments; that, however anxious Persia might be to assert her rights in that quarter, she could do nothing which she might imagine to be distasteful to the Russian Government, and that he had reason to believe that if she were encouraged to do so by both Russia and England, it would not be so difficult as was contended for her to establish a real authority in those districts.

I made some remarks in support of Lord Hartington's arguments, and I once more impressed upon Prince Lobanow my conviction of the importance of the question, and of the expediency of removing all occasion and opportunity for a further Russian advance towards the Afghan frontier.

His Excellency replied that he had already submitted to his Government the proposal which Lord Hartington had just laid before him in detail. Their view had been that if there were occasion to proceed to a delimitation of the frontier in question, it was a matter which concerned Russia and the Shah exclusively.

His Excellency then went on to discuss the arguments adduced by Lord Hartington. He urged that, considering that Persia had never been able to repress the incursions of the Téké Turkomans, it was scarcely to be expected that she would be more fortunate with regard to the Turkomans of Merv, and that an arrangement which would intrust to the Persian authorities the duty of taking measures for the security of the Russian frontiers would be a mere delusion. England, on the other hand, was so remote from the regions in question that her participation in such an arrangement offered no guarantee for its efficacy.

Prince Lobanow added that Russia had never interfered in the arrangements

between England and Afghanistan. She expected on her side to be left free to take any measures with regard to the States within the sphere of her influence which might be required for purposes of security.

I observed upon this that it might be inferred from his Excellency's words that Russia considered herself free to advance to Sarakhs. This, however, was exactly the kind of approach which the Russian and English Governments had always joined in deprecating. The Russian Government had especially in 1875 dwelt upon the more than inconvenient results that would attend an English movement upon Herat. Lord Derby used the same language as to advances on the part of Russia. As it happened, we had withdrawn from Afghanistan, while the Russians had advanced beyond the lines they occupied at that time. As an affair of national *amour-propre*, the present time was singularly propitious for Russia to make an arrangement which would restore confidence on both sides.

Prince Lobanow remarked that he was not in a position to make any reply to what I had said on the subject of Herat. It was a matter upon which he could not undertake to anticipate the views of his Government.

We returned to the discussion of the main question. In regard to the objections which had been advanced by Prince Lobanow as to the practical value of the proposed arrangement, I said that a combined pressure by England and Russia could not fail of inducing the Persian Government to take effectual measures in the territory which would be recognized as belonging to them. It was my belief that the Persian Government would accept without difficulty the conditions which might be attached to our recognition, and would seriously and conscientiously endeavour to fulfil them.

In this opinion Lord Hartington expressed his concurrence.

In answer to Prince Lobanow's argument, that the arrangement offered to Russia no *quid pro quo*, and that it was impossible, at the distance at which the English were, that they could offer Russia any security against molestation, I said I could speak to his Excellency with perfect frankness, as there was no chance of his misconstruing into anything of a possible menace that which I had to say. It seemed to me that there would be an immense advantage to Russia, no less than to England, if an agreement could be come to by which suspicion on both sides might be averted.

Prince Lobanow listened attentively to my observations, but said that his instructions were positive, and that he had no latitude to depart from the language he had held.

Lord Hartington and I requested his Excellency to lay before his Government the considerations which had been stated on either side, in the hope that it might modify their views.

This Prince Lobanow consented to do. At my request his Excellency has also been good enough to show me his account of the interview before forwarding it to St. Petersburgh, and I am enabled to state that it corresponds substantially with that which I have given in the present despatch.

No. 18.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me again this afternoon, and brought to me the draft of his despatch giving an account of his conversation with Lord Hartington and me yesterday.

I have requested his Excellency to alter slightly one or two passages in which I thought Lord Hartington's and my language had not been quite accurately rendered, and to insert a few remarks which we had made and which he had omitted to mention.

I took the opportunity to make a further observation on the contention of the Russian Government, that the further delimitation of the Persian frontier beyond Baba-Durmaz was a matter which concerned Persia and Russia alone. I said that it had been for years a settled understanding between Russia and England that they both desired to maintain the stability and independence of Persia. I could not, therefore, admit that Her Majesty's Government were not interested in the settlement of frontier questions regarding the latter country.

But I continued that without giving up that principle we should be satisfied if

an agreement were arrived at between Russia and Persia in the sense of Lord Hartington's proposal without England being a party to it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 19.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 24, 1882.*

AT an interview yesterday the Russian Ambassador showed me a Russian map, according to which the tract which Lord Hartington had proposed to include in Persian territory in the delimitation beyond Baba-Durmaz did not come within the Persian frontier-line. I asked whether any assent had been given to this line by Persia, but his Excellency was unable to answer the question. I said I would mention the matter to Lord Hartington.

I have now informed Prince Lobanow that the information possessed by the India Office leads to a conclusion opposite to that which would be drawn from the map in question, and that, although the tract may possibly not at this time be in the actual occupation of the Persians, there can, in our opinion, be no doubt that it belongs to Persia of right.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 20.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 27.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, February 13, 1882.*

AT an interview which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday his Excellency informed me that the question of Merv and the future policy of Persia towards the Téké Turkomans had been carefully considered by the Shah in consultation with his Ministers. The result of their deliberations on these points had been that the Persian Government were now convinced of the fallacy of the idea which they had formerly entertained, that it might be possible for Persia to obtain possession of Merv and establish her supremacy over the Téké tribes by accepting the allegiance proffered to them by some of the Chiefs. It was well known that there was no unanimity amongst the tribes, and, especially with regard to this project, there was great diversity of opinion amongst them. The Persian Government, therefore, considered that it would be most undesirable to enter into any arrangement of this kind with the Merv Chiefs, as it would entail heavy expenditure without any certainty of a good result, and might possibly lead to serious complications and humiliating failure.

In the opinion of the Shah's Ministers, Persia could not establish and maintain her authority over the Téké Turkomans without having recourse to military operations, which could only be undertaken at great inconvenience and expense. The Merv campaign which they undertook in 1861 had taught them that a large and well-equipped force would be required to overcome the resistance of the Téké people, and that for many years a strong permanent garrison would be necessary to enable them to keep the tribes in order.

Under these circumstances, in view of the cost and risk of embarking on such a formidable undertaking, the Persian Government had decided that they could not attempt an armed occupation of the Merv territory. They had therefore determined to abstain for the present from all interference with Merv and the Tejjen districts occupied by Téké Turkomans, and instructions in this sense had been sent to the Prince-Governor of Khorassan for the guidance of the local authorities in that province.

I presume that the pressure brought to bear upon the Merv Turkomans by the Russians in the negotiations now carried on with them from Askabad, and the influence exercised upon the Téké Chiefs by the Khan of Khiva, acting in the interests of Russia, and by the Akhal portion of the Téké tribe, will at no distant date produce their effect, and that the Turkomans of Merv will offer their submission to Russia, or place themselves under her protection, and when either of these results has

been obtained the Russians will doubtless proceed to occupy the Tejend lands and such parts of the Dereghez and Kelat Ateks as may be necessary to afford them an open road towards Sarakhs, in which district they will, in my opinion, endeavour to establish themselves in a strong position, possibly without attempting to interfere with the territory on the left bank of the Heri-Rud River, which is now actually in the possession of Persia.

I am informed by the Hissam-es-Sultaneh, Prince Sultan Murad Mirza, who was for many years Governor-General of Khorassan, that the Persian town of Sarakhs is built on a very ill-chosen site. It was originally intended to have been constructed on the right bank of the river, but the Persian General to whom the work was intrusted having misappropriated the money given for the purpose, and finding that his proceedings were about to be made the subject of inquiry, hastily threw up some fortifications around the camp he then occupied, and these having been subsequently completed, now form the present Persian fort of Sarakhs. The river at that spot is dry for three months of the year, from July to October, when the water entirely disappears in the gravelly soil through which it runs, a supply sufficient for the wants of the garrison being, however, procurable by digging near the surface in the bed of the stream.

No. 21.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 3.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 28, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 21st instant, I have the honour to state that the "Golos" of the 17th (29th) March, 1882, publishes a telegram, dated the 14th (26th) March, from Askabad, which has been translated by Mr. Michell as follows:—

"Kouchine's caravan which safely reached Merv has now returned, having disposed of all its goods.

"On Tuesday, the 16th (28th) March, it is intended to commence planting trees throughout the whole Akhal Téké Oasis.

"The desert at the present time is being reconnoitred. Between Akhal Téke and Khiva many Téké auls, the existence of which was unknown to us, have now been discovered.

"The Tékés have volunteered gratuitously to repair all the roads between Askabad and Kizil-Arvat under the direction of Russian sappers. The work is already commenced."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 22.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 6, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Invalide Russe" of the 21st March publishes an Imperial Order respecting the formation of six rifle battalions, numbered 1 to 6. The same Order directs the formation of a siege artillery company for Askabad out of the 3rd company of the Gunib siege artillery train, and to replace the existing hospitals in the Transcaspian by lazarets at the following points: Krasnovodsk and Askabad, 150 beds; Chekishler, Bami, Kizil-Arvat, and Geuk-Tépé, 28 beds each.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 23.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 12, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April* 12, 1882.

HAVING learnt that 140 Russians, with four guns, had gone from Askabad to Tejend to erect a fort, and had been repelled by Tékés of latter place, aided by those of Merv, I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs whether report was true. His Excellency replied that he had heard detachment of Russian cavalry had gone towards Tejend, and had made inquiry on subject of Russian Minister, who had stated that about fifty Cossacks had been sent to Karibend, on Tejend River, to secure safety of Russian merchants who had lately gone to Merv. He denied that Cossacks had guns, and said when they reached Karibend orders were given for their immediate return.

A Dereghez Chief now here informs me that Karibend is the most important position in the Tejend Settlement.

No. 24.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 18, 10·15 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April* 18, 1882.

EYOUB KHAN and Luinab, with ten other Afghan Chiefs, arrived here to-day, with over 300 followers. Persian Government propose to apply for the dismissal of the latter as soon as possible.

No. 25.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and in answer to my inquiries informed me that he had received two private letters from M. de Giers, in which the latter spoke of the strong desire of the Emperor and of himself to be on the best terms with this country, and of their anxiety to meet the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Central Asia as much as possible. The question, however, M. de Giers added, was a difficult one, and required consideration, as it would be impossible for Russia to sacrifice what was necessary for her security. Prince Lobanow said that M. de Giers had twice informed him that he was waiting for your Excellency to open the subject with him.

I answered that on my part I was on the point of asking him (Prince Lobanow) whether he had received, or expected to receive, from M. de Giers an answer enabling him to continue the discussion.

I said that I had given your Excellency no instructions. I had only forwarded to you an account of the conversation which had been held on the subject. I would, however, at once telegraph to your Excellency requesting you to read these accounts to M. de Giers.

I observed that I had no objection to the question being discussed either here or at St. Petersburgh, but that it appeared to me to be of doubtful advantage that there should be double communications going on at the same time.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 26.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 24.)

My Lord, *Tehran, February* 26, 1882.

THIS question with respect to Hussein Kuli, the Oghurjele Turkoman Settlement, at the mouth of the Attrek, has been frequently discussed with the Russian Legation here without any definite result being obtained. The Russians claim that Hussein Kuli, being situated on the north bank of the Attrek, is within their territory,

and this would appear from Major Napier's map of that part of the Caspian, and from other evidence, to be the case. The Persians, however, pretend that if the river was not diverted from its natural channel it would leave Hussein Kuli on the left or Persian bank, and they further maintain that the Persian nationality of the Oghurjele tribe could not be affected by the position of this Settlement, seeing that the tribe and Chiefs all claim to be Persian subjects, and Russia is bound by the Agreement, under which she occupied the territory north of the Attrek River, to abstain from all interference with the Yemoot Turkomans owing allegiance to the Shah.

The Russians have lately commenced to levy taxes from the Turkomans on their side of the Attrek, and a demand which has been made for the payment to the Russian Government of an annual tax of 6 roubles from each family of the Oghurjelli tribe residing at Hussein Kuli has induced the Persian Government to reassert their claims in respect to that place and its inhabitants. The Minister for Foreign Affairs accordingly, by order of the Shah, addressed an official remonstrance to the Russian Minister against the continued interference of the Russian authorities with the Hussein Kuli Settlement. To this communication no written reply was returned, but M. Zinoview called upon Mirza Saïd Khan and discussed the matter verbally with him. Having urged that it was not advisable for the Persian Government to enter upon an official correspondence on this subject at present, the Persian Minister agreed to withdraw his note and substitute in its place a Memorandum, proposing that all further action with regard to the Oghurjele tribe should be suspended by the Russian authorities pending an inquiry to be instituted by the Russo-Persian Commissioners, who will shortly be appointed to complete the demarkation of the Akhal-Khorassan line of frontier.

M. Zinoview telegraphed this suggestion to St. Petersburgh, and I am informed that it has been agreed to, and that the Commissioners will visit Chekishler and decide the question as to the possession of Hussein Kuli before proceeding to Chat to trace the boundary-line, thence to Baba-Durmaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 27.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 1.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 26, 1882.*

I TOOK occasion last week to tell M. de Giers that I had learnt that some Russian troops had advanced from Askabad to Karibend, on the River Tejend, and I asked his Excellency whether he had received any information upon the subject. He replied that no news to that effect had reached him; that he did not believe the statement could possibly be true, and that the utmost which could have happened would have been that a few men might have been sent as an escort to a caravan of Russian merchants going to Merv. His Excellency added that the most stringent instructions had been given to General Rohrberg to avoid as far as possible sending any troops at all beyond the limits of the territory now held by the Russian forces, and to abstain to the utmost from exciting the susceptibilities of neighbouring States. M. de Giers assured me that the Government had great confidence in the discretion and prudence of General Röhrberg.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 28.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 3, 1882.*

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and asked me whether I had received any reports from your Excellency on the Central Asian question.

I said that your Excellency had informed me privately that you had had some informal conversation with M. de Giers on the subject, but that the interview had been interrupted; that M. de Giers had expressed a great wish to be on terms of cordial understanding with England, but seemed to think that there would be strong objections

to acknowledging Persian authority over the strip of territory between Baba-Durmaz and Sarakhs, believing that it would deprive the Russians of the means of defence against the inroads of the Turkomans, which the Persians would not of themselves have power to repress.

Prince Lobanow said that he had received a letter from M. de Giers of a similar tenour, but which he thought it necessary to show me, because M. de Giers said he was still waiting for a communication from your Excellency. M. de Giers had stated also to him the desire of the Russian Government to be in agreement and good relations with England, and intimated that the Russian Government could have no objection to our doing what we thought necessary within our own limits to make our position secure, but that they could not undertake to sacrifice their own means of security for the purpose.

I told the Prince that I should wait till I heard again from your Excellency, on the conclusion of your communications with M. de Giers, before making any observations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 29.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh; April* 29, 1882.

IN accordance with the permission granted me by your Lordship's telegram of the 22nd instant, I have had two interviews with M. de Giers on the 26th and 28th instant, during which I have read to him your Lordship's recent despatches, informing me of conversations you had had with the Russian Ambassador in London respecting the Central Asian question.

M. de Giers agreed with your Lordship that it would be better that there should not be double discussions, and he stated that he had a few days ago sent further instructions to Prince Lobanow, the nature of which his Excellency will probably have already communicated to you. But as he seemed to wish to make me acquainted with his views, I listened, offering only enough observations to keep up the conversation.

His Excellency answered me not once, but several times during the conversation, that Russia had no intention whatever at present of advancing towards Sarakhs or Merv, or of occupying with her forces any territory in that region beyond what was already in her possession. He could positively assert that this was the feeling and determination of the Russian Government at present, and that he hoped it would be carried out for many years to come. What might happen in the far future it was impossible to say or divine; for circumstances might compel them to do what they had now no intention of doing.

The influence of Russia, he said, was entirely devoted to the establishment of firm and permanent peace in that region, and it was now beginning to have a good effect. It was, therefore, very desirable that there should be no troublesome or disorderly neighbours who would counteract the measures which the Russian authorities were now carrying out for the pacification and civilization of the Turkoman tribes in that region. The Russian Government could not acquiesce in the proposal made by Her Majesty's Government, that the Atek country from Sarakhs to Baba-Durmaz, and between that line and the River Tejend, should be handed over to the care and into the possession of Persia. His Excellency insisted that she had no right whatever to that country, and that whatever influence Russia and Great Britain might bring to bear upon her she would be utterly unable to govern it, and that any attempt to do so on her part would only excite discontent, and produce disorder where there now seemed to be some prospect of the natives abandoning habits of brigandage, and devoting themselves to commercial and agricultural pursuits. He understood that Her Majesty's Government were anxious that Russia should be confined within the limits now held, and should not extend her territory to the East or South, and the Russian Government declared that they had no desire to advance in that direction; but His Imperial Majesty was very averse to making any engagements to that effect with another Power, which the force of circumstances might hereafter render it impossible for the Russian authorities to keep. His Excellency was of opinion that the occupation of the Atek region by Persia would have just the contrary effect to that hoped for

and anticipated by Her Majesty's Government. He believed that it would create such a state of disorder ("un tel gâchis") in that country, that not only would the people of Merv avail themselves of it to come westward for purposes of plunder, but that the Atek Turkomans themselves would be making incursions into the territory now held by Russia, and attacking Russian caravans, so that the Russian military authorities would be compelled to enter the Atek territory for the purpose of punishing the wrong-doers, and preventing their hostilities from being repeated; and this, notwithstanding the most stringent instructions to the Russian military authorities that they should allow no movement in that direction, instructions which General Röhrberg had shown himself entirely disposed to obey.

M. de Giers informed me that very recently the Turkomans in the district of Dereghez had risen against their Khan, and that their motive in doing so was to throw off their allegiance to Persia and come under the control of the Russian authorities; that the Persian Government had consequently addressed themselves to the Russian Government, entreating them to use their influence in order to pacify the disaffected Turkomans; that General Röhrberg had, in compliance with this request, been instructed to cause the latter to be informed that on no account would the Russian authorities receive them under their protection or control; and that these instructions, having been carried out, had had the effect of undeceiving and pacifying the Turkomans in the Dereghez district.

But M. de Giers proceeded to say that, whilst the Russian Government were entirely opposed to allowing the Atek territory to be placed under the direct and sole control of Persia, they were much inclined to endeavour to come to some understanding with the Persian Government as to the government of that region. He was not prepared to say as yet what might be the nature of such an arrangement; for, indeed, it had not yet been sufficiently considered, and he was also desirous to await the arrival of M. Zinoview, the Russian Minister at Tehran, who is now on his way to this city, but will not probably arrive here for three weeks or more. But in making any such proposal to the Persian Government they would be strongly recommended not to pretend to or to assert any rights over the district of Merv, nor to send an expedition for the purpose of establishing their supposed rights to that country. Such a move, his Excellency said, would be the cause of much confusion and disorder, and might force the Russian authorities to adopt more vigorous measures.

In the course of conversation, M. de Giers said that his Government would have no particular objection to Candahar being occupied by Her Majesty's forces, or even British authorities exercising controlling influence at Herat; but they had a right to expect that Russian influence should be allowed to prevail in the countries to the north of Afghanistan and Persia, with which they were encouraging the establishment of commercial relations, in the hope of imbuing their inhabitants with ideas of civilization.

M. de Giers added that, with a view to preventing disturbances on the borders of Afghanistan, he considered it to be of great importance that the boundary of that country from Khojah Saleh to the Persian frontier in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs should be formally and definitely laid down, and that he had instructed Prince Lobanow to endeavour to induce Her Majesty's Government to agree to the adoption of measures for this purpose.

M. de Giers spoke with great apparent frankness on the above subjects; but I gathered that the proposed occupation of the Atek territory by Persia had been carefully considered by the Emperor, the Minister of War, and himself, and had encountered the decided opposition of all of them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 30.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 29, 1882.

AT the close of my conversation yesterday with M. de Giers on the Central Asian question, I asked his Excellency whether it was true that General Tchernaieff was to be appointed Governor-General of Turkestan. M. de Giers replied that he believed that he would not receive that appointment; that it had certainly been thought of at one time, but that the idea had been abandoned, and he believed

that the administration of that country would be left in the hands of General Röhrberg.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 31.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 15.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 9, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the 25th April (7th May) publishes the following letter from Askabad, dated the 22nd March (3rd April), which has been translated by Mr. Michell:—

"Generally speaking, life in the Transcaspian is not so pleasant as at first appeared; Askabad itself is developing, and has a brilliant future as regards trade, the influx of goods from Merv on the one side and from Persia on the other being very considerable. Caravans with goods pass through incessantly.

"The main articles of Eastern trade are bright-coloured carpets and manufactures of silk.

"These goods are sent to Tiflis, Nijni-Novgorod, and Moscow, and, in return, manufactures of cotton and leather are sent to the Transcaspian, and find a market not only in Askabad, but also in Merv.

"A plentiful supply of provisions is obtained at moderate prices from Persia.

"The soil in the Akhal Téké Oasis, especially at and about Askabad, is very fertile. The men of the 74th infantry regiment of Stavropol raised their own vegetables, of which they had a supply during the whole winter; they also raised water-melons and pumpkins. During their stay at Askabad the soldiers of the same regiment erected eighty huts out of bricks of their own manufacture, and these structures give Askabad the appearance of a town.

"The great inconvenience, however, as regards Askabad, is the difficulty of communication between that place and Kizil-Arvat, the terminus of the railway.

"There is no regular postal communication, and the journey is both expensive and tedious, the usual time employed in traversing the 206 versts being eight days, and sometimes as much as two weeks are wasted, owing to insufficiency of means of transport.

"Provisions for the troops stationed at Askabad are transported from the commissariat depôts along the line in waggons drawn either by horses or camels. The excessive heat (55°) which prevails in summer renders the ordinary large transport waggons impracticable."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 32.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 22.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April 15, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translated extract of a letter from Meshed, stating that 140 Russian horsemen, with four guns, had proceeded from Askabad to the Tejend, to erect a fort at that place. According to the information reported therein, the Tékés of Merv, hearing of this, expelled the two Russian merchants who lately went there, and then, having joined the Tékés residing on the Tejend, drove the Russians out of that district, whence the latter fled to the Ateks of Dereghez and Kelat.

I questioned the Minister for Foreign Affairs as to the accuracy of this statement. His Excellency replied that, having heard that a detachment of Russian cavalry had gone towards the Tejend, he had made inquiry on the subject of the Russian Minister. M. Zinoview had informed him that about fifty Cossacks had been sent from Gavars to a place named Karibend, and that the object in sending this detachment in the direction of the Tejend district was to secure the safety of the two Russian merchants who had lately visited Merv. The latter had not been well treated at that place, and fearing that they would be detained or molested if they remained longer, they had sold

off their goods at a loss, and were endeavouring to get back by way of the Tejend. The Cossacks had no guns with them, and when they reached Karibend orders were given for their immediate return, and they came back at once, bringing with them the two merchants.

I have made inquiry of one of the Dereghez Chiefs now in Tehran, and it appears from his statement that Karibend is situated on the Tejend River, and that it is the most important place in that Settlement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 32.

(Translation.) *April* 1, 1882.

I HAVE just now learnt from an authentic source that 140 horsemen, with four guns, had left Askabad with the intention of building a fort at Tejend, but on their arrival there the Turkomans, finding out their intentions, turned them out and pursued them as far as the Atek of Dereghez and Kelat. They had also treated the two Russian traders who recently went openly to Merv in the same manner,

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No. 33.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 19, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract, translated by Mr. Michell from the "Golos" of to-day, relating to the Russian trade with Merv and Bokhara, and the friendly relations existing between the Mervites and the Russian authorities at Askabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Extract from the "Golos" of May 7 (19), 1882.

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" of the 7th (19th) May, 1882, contains the following extract from a Baku newspaper:—

"The 'Baku Intelligencer' states that the goods sent to Merv by the Russian merchant, Kouchine, were disposed of partly for cash and partly on credit. The Mervites are anxious to receive a further supply of goods, and accordingly a second caravan, which was destined for Bokhara, will stop at Merv. It appears that the road from Askabad to Bokhara viâ Merv is the shortest and most convenient of all the routes leading from Russian territory into Bokhara. The goods most in demand at Merv are cotton prints, small iron and copper ware, and kerosene. Raw cotton is the principal article of export from Bokhara. The Mervites guarantee the safe passage of Russian caravans through their territory to Bokhara, and their amicable relations towards the Russians are supported by facts; recently, at the request of the authorities of Askabad, they promptly returned to the owners all the goods, camels, &c., which they had seized from a caravan which was proceeding from Khiva to Askabad last year."

St. Petersburgh, May 7 (19), 1882.

No. 34.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 19, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Askabad, dated the 23rd April (5th May), and inserted in the "Moscow Gazette" of the 29th April (10th May), states that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, during his sojourn in the

Akhal Téké Oasis, became convinced of the necessity of extending the railway to Geuk-Tépé, and of constructing a road for wheeled vehicles from that point into Persia. The following are the remarks made by the "Moscow Gazette" on the subject, as translated by Mr. Michell:—

"The Akhal Téké Oasis is undoubtedly the most important Russian possession in Central Asia. It is there, more than at any other point, that Russia should establish a firm footing and enjoy freedom of action. This object can be attained the sooner by developing the resources of that country, which is destined in the future to become the chief base of Russian supremacy in Central Asia, and by establishing good means of communication. A railroad that shall penetrate through the oasis from the sea to its eastern frontier would not only be a military road, although important in that respect. The railroad was originally undertaken with military objects, but enough employment of another kind will be found for it, as already rich naptha deposits have been discovered. Certainly at the present time there is not much work for the railway, but this is mainly attributable to the fact of its non-completion and its inaccessibility, owing to the absence of routes leading to it by which goods could be transported. From Askabad, for example, one of the most important points in the oasis, the distance to Kizil-Arvat is only about 206 versts; yet owing to the inadequate means of transport, eight, and as many as fourteen days are lost in traversing the distance. The want of proper means of communication with Persia, with which country Russia carries on a considerable trade, is severely felt, whereas much of this trade might easily and conveniently be transported by means of the Transcaspian Railway, on which no inconsiderable amount of money has been expended. Not to complete the railway would be equal to losing the money expended on it, and voluntarily to abandon the influence obtained by peaceful means over Merv, towards which, as well as towards Persia, England wistfully extends her glance."

According to a letter from the correspondent of the "Moscow Gazette" at Askabad, dated the 14th (26th) March, the past winter, which set in suddenly towards the end of November, was severely felt throughout the oasis. At Askabad the thermometer fell to 12° and at Bami to 17° Réaumur below zero. The troops were speedily housed in warm quarters, but the natives suffered considerably from the cold, many of them having lost all they possessed at the storming of Geuk-Tépé. In December the cold reached its maximum, and news came to Askabad of the suspension of the traffic on the railway, the whole line being buried under 2 feet of snow; telegraph communication was stopped, and the natives drove their camels into the desert, thereby causing an interruption to the transport of provisions. On the 10th December news came that Michailoff Bay was frozen, and thus Askabad was cut off from Krasnovodsk and the rest of the world. Thanks, however, to the energy of the officials, difficulties were soon adjusted, communication re-established, and 3,000 natives supplied with warm clothing; a grant of 3,000 roubles was, moreover, made to them by the Caucasian section of the "Red Cross."

The chief evil of the freezing of Michailoff Bay was the stoppage of the naphtha supply for fuelling the locomotives and water-filters, whereby the inhabitants of Michailofsk were compelled to consume snow water. On the 25th December a canal was dug in the ice, and barges with naptha were able to reach the shore.

The correspondent writes that with the commencement of spring great activity prevails throughout the region, roads are being repaired, large numbers of trees are being planted, houses built, and regular telegraphic communication established. Moreover, surveys are being made of the new region, especially of the desert, where numbers of Téké Turkomans, now Russian subjects, are encamped, and friendly relations are being renewed with Merv. In order to promote the cultivation of cotton and silk in the region the Turkomans have been supplied with American seed cotton, and with seeds of the mulberry tree.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 35.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 23, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that General Constantin Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkestan, died at Tashkend on the 16th instant.

It is again said that General Tcherniaiew is likely to be appointed General Kaufmann's successor at that post, as he is considered by His Majesty the Emperor to be the most capable of all his officers of satisfactorily performing the arduous and responsible duties of that position.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 36.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 12.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 7, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the official Gazette of the 26th May (7th June), 1882, notifies the appointment of Lieutenant-General Tchernaieff to the post of Governor-General of Turkestan, and Commander of the troops of the Turkestan region.

The appointment of Lieutenant-General Kolpakovsky, now Acting Governor of the Turkestan region, to the post of Governor-General of the Steppes and Commander of the newly-created military circuit of Omsk, is gazetted on the same day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 37.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 12, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Invalide Russe" of the 28th May (9th June), 1882, giving the substance of an Order issued by Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff relative to the state of the Transcaspian regions and of the town of Askabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of May 28 (June 9), 1882.

(Translation.)

IN an Order of the day, issued to the troops of the military circuit of the Caucasus by the Commander-General Prince Dondoukoff, it is stated that, during his visit to the Transcaspian region, which he inspected from Krasnovodsk to Askabad, he became convinced of the peaceful condition of the country and of the good relations existing between the inhabitants and the troops; likewise of the satisfactory development of the natural resources of the region, which served as a proof of the confidence felt by the inhabitants in the administration. At Askabad, which a year ago was only an insignificant and thinly-populated place, General Prince Dondoukoff framed the nucleus of a large town with a growing trade, well-constructed barracks for the garrison, and a strong fortification, erected by the labours of those glorious Russian troops, the conquerors of the Téké Oasis. The Order concludes with an announcement that, with a view to commemorate the great services of the Stavropol regiment, three battalions of which have been stationed at Askabad, and are now returning to the Caucasus, the General has ordered that one of the bastions of the fortress of Askabad shall be named after that regiment.

St. Petersburgh, June 9, 1882.

No. 38.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 26.)

My Lord, *Tehran, May* 1, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th February last, in which I reported that the Russian authorities at Chekishlar had levied a tax of 6 roubles from each family of the Oghurjele tribe residing at Hussein Kuli, who are claimed by the Persian Government as subjects of the Shah, I have now the honour to state that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has endeavoured, by verbal representations addressed to the Russian Minister here, to obtain repayment of the amount thus exacted, and that he has been informed that, had the Persian Government stated their objections sooner, orders could have been given to refrain for the present from levying this tax, but that as it had now been exacted, the amount could not be refunded.

The question of Persia's right to Hussein Kuli at the mouth of the Atrek, and to the Oghurjele tribe residing there, will be investigated, and finally decided by the Frontier Commissioners, who are shortly to visit the Atrek and the new Akhal Khorassan boundary. The Nessar-ed-Dowlet has been named by the Shah for this duty, and he is prepared to leave Tehran as soon as the nomination of the Russian Commissioner has been notified to the Persian Government. Mirza Saeed Khan inquired last week of M. Zinoview when the Russian Commissioner would be ready to proceed with the Akhal frontier demarcation, and he was informed in reply that the Russian Government had not yet come to any decision on that point.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 39.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 26.)

My Lord, *Tehran, May* 15, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a further Report by Mr. Stephen, in which he has embodied the geographical information which he was able to collect during his recent visit to Askabad with respect to the Transcaspian province.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Geographical Description of the Transcaspian Province.

THE Transcaspian province, as now constituted, may be said to consist of two portions: the one extending from Alexandrofsk southward and south-eastward to Chekishlar and Kizil-Arvat; the other stretching along the northern side of the Kopet Dagh as far as Baba-Durmaz. Owing to the exceptional severity of the weather and a heavy fall of snow the roads across the Kopet Dagh had become quite impassable, so that, much to my regret, I was prevented returning to the Caspian by the Atrek route. I am, therefore, unable to give any description of the south-westerly portion of the province. My route lay as follows:—Krasnovodsk to Michaelofsk by sea; thence by rail between the Great and Little Balkans along the northern side of the Kuren Dagh to Kizil-Arvat, and thence through the Akhal Oasis by road to Askabad. It is consequently to these districts that the following remarks principally relate.

There are three mountain ranges in the Transcaspian province, viz., the Balkan, the Kuren, and the Kopet ranges. In addition to these a ramification which may be held to be a branch of the Great Balkan runs along the northern shore of Balkan Bay to Krasnovodsk. Of these ranges, the Great Balkan perhaps presents the most imposing appearance. The higher portion of its south-western face is precipitous, its crest being estimated at about 5,300 feet above the sea level. I was informed that there were some fairly large juniper trees growing near the summit, but, as far as I could judge by my field-glass, the north-western, western, and south-western faces of these mountains were almost bare of vegetation. On the other hand, plentiful supplies of firewood were evidently to be obtained from the bushes (principally saksaoul) which were growing in the sandy soil at their foot. I was unable to

gather any reliable information with regard to the formation of these mountains. A general impression appeared to prevail that they were rich in minerals, but, notwithstanding many inquiries, I failed to elicit any positive evidence in support of this theory. To the south of the Great Balkans, about 25 to 30 miles distant from its southernmost spur, lies the Little Balkan, a low bleak ridge, the highest point of which does not exceed 2,200 feet. Naptha has been discovered on the northern side of this mountain, and I was shown excellent specimens of mineral wax, large supplies of which I was told had been found in the neighbourhood. A branch line from Bala Hishem to the naphtha springs in the Little Balkan is now in course of construction. From the south-eastern point of the Little Balkan runs a low ridge of mountains called the Kuren Dagh, of which the average height does not exceed 1,500 to 2,000 feet. It extends in a south-easterly direction as far as Kizil-Arvat, where it joins the Kopet Dagh. This latter range presents a bolder appearance than the Kuren Dagh. It likewise stretches in a south-easterly direction, but its elevation is greater, its height increasing as it extends southward. One summit overlooking the Germat Valley has been estimated to be between 7,000 and 8,000 feet above the sea, but the average height of the range may, I think, be calculated at not more than 3,000 to 4,000 feet. Although the portions of this chain of mountains which stretches from the neighbourhood of the Great Balkan to within a short distance of Lutfabad have received separate names, there cannot be said to be any break between them. I would especially desire to draw attention to this fact, as being an important argument against the alleged existence of a southern branch of the Oxus, to which subject I will venture presently to allude. The distance between the northernmost point of the Little Balkan and the most southerly point of the Kopet Dagh is about 270 miles. The general appearance of the northern face of this chain may be described as follows: As seen from the Transcaspian railway, the Little Balkan and Kuren Dagh are bare of trees with few protuberances, the declivities being abrupt. With regard to the Kopet Dagh, however, it is otherwise. Soon after leaving Kizil-Arvat, clumps of trees are observable half-way up the mountains. At the foot of the range there are undulating hills surmounted by deep grooves and an irregular ridge. As the traveller proceeds the vegetation increases, the valleys become more frequent, and the scene presents a more picturesque appearance. From the information I received I am inclined to think that the declivities on this sides of the range are steeper than on the other. As far as my little scientific knowledge enabled me to judge, I should say the declivities of the northern slope of the Kopet Dagh were from 30 to 35 degrees.

Having thus briefly sketched the general character of the mountain system of the country, I will now describe the nature of its soil. The tract from Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat is a barren, sandy plain, strongly impregnated in parts with salt. On the small islands at the mouth of the Michaelofski Gulf, and along the seaboard from Balkan Bay southward, the surface is undulating, owing to the sand-hills formed by the action of the periodical east winds. At Michaelofski these hills attain a considerable height. An engineer, a passenger on board the steamer from Baku to Krasnovodsk, informed me that it had been estimated that during the last few years there had been a rise of 12 feet along the coast. From the Great Balkan to Kizil-Arvat the ground is perfectly level, save at one point between Acha Kaïma and Kezandjik, where there is a slight ridge with a gradient of 1 in 100. From Kizil-Arvat to Gavars stretches a flat oasis, known as Akhal. It is hardly necessary for me to say that this oasis has been formed by the alluvial deposits of the streams issuing from the northern slope of the Kopet Dagh. It is irregular in breadth, being narrow at its commencement, but widening as it extends southward. Its whole area may be estimated to be about 3,000 square miles. Soon after leaving Kizil-Arvat the soil becomes clayey, with occasional white patches of salt. As Bami is approached the signs of fertility increase. Corn and melon fields are occasionally observable on the side of the road; the white patches cease, and the ground becomes firmer. At Archman there are a few willow trees, and at Durrum, 29½ versts further on, there are several gardens of vines and mulberries. By far the richer portion of the oasis, however, lies between Geuk-Tépé and Askabad. This district is well adapted for cultivation, the streams being larger and the soil evidently more fruitful. Here there is good pasturage and a rich soil. Around Askabad itself there are several gardens containing peach, apricot, and mulberry trees, and, from the appearance of the ground, I should imagine that considerable quantities of corn could be grown in the neighbourhood. It would take too long to describe separately and in detail the vegetation and the cereals under cultivation in the different districts of Akhal. I will therefore sum up this portion of my Report as follows:—

Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat. — Sand, camel thorn, and, occasionally, saksaou shrubs.

Kizil-Arvat to Geuk-Tépé.—Trees: willow. Weeds: camel thorn, &c. Cereals: wheat, barley, maize, yundja, millet. Fruits: melons.

Geuk-Tépé to Gavars.—Trees: willow, nut, mulberry, apricot, peach. Weeds: camel thorn, &c. Cereals: wheat, barley, maize, millet, yundja, rice, cotton. Fruits: melons, grapes, mulberries, apricots, peaches.

The grass, of which there is said to be a plentiful supply between Geuk-Tépé and Askabad during the early summer, is succulent and fattening; and so variegated and brilliant are the wild flowers, that in the spring the surface of the plain has the appearance, I was told, of a gorgeous carpet. Akhal is watered by seventeen perennial rivers or streams. Their breadth varies from 2 to 18 feet, the stream flowing past Baghir Kale containing the largest volume of water. In addition to these there are one or two "kariz," or underground water-courses, besides several other streams, which, having a temporary existence during a short period of the year, have been inserted in some maps. Judging from the number of dry water-courses intersecting the road, the spring flood must be very heavy.

There are two roads from Krasnovodsk to Khiva, the one striking east and passing the wells of Siuli Gesli Ata and Tchagil; the other skirts the shore of Balkan Bay to within a short distance of the Great Balkan, and thence running inland on the northern side of the range passes the wells of Kara Tchargli, Kosh Agerli, Adja Kui, Burudja, Halmadja Anidja, Yapkedgé, and Chagil. The latter of these is the more frequented. From Burudja a branch road runs round the southern face of the Great Balkan to Molla Kari and Michaelofski, and from the neighbourhood of the Anidja Well another road runs to Kizil-Arvat. Besides the above, there is a road from Geuk-Tépé to Khiva, which, in olden times, was the commercial route between the latter city and the north of Khorassan; as also a road running to the west of the Little Balkan in a southern direction to Chekishlar and the Atrek. I have already described the route from Krasnovodsk to Askabad. As to the passes over the Kopet Dagh there are in all four. Speaking from native and Russian authority, none of them are very difficult, that from Bendesen to Bami being perhaps the easiest. The other three pierce the range at Kizil-Arvat, Geuk-Tépé, and Askabad. I must not forget to mention that I picked up at Kizil-Arvat several pieces of calcareous rock, composed entirely of marine shells, and found in large quantities in the Kopet Dagh, the discovery of which tends conclusively to prove the submarine origin of the Central Asian desert.

I would now venture to make a few remarks with reference to the ancient course of the Oxus, respecting which I was able to pick up several interesting details. So many high geographical authorities have taken part in the controversy on this subject that I broach the question with the greatest diffidence. In doing so, I trust it will not be imagined that I would be bold enough to start a new theory, in contradiction to the opinions held by geographers who have made a study of this question. My only desire is to set forth, for the appreciation of those most capable to judge, certain facts which have come under my notice.

The information which has, from time to time, been furnished regarding the Oxus is so varied and conflicting that it would take too long, and be out of place here were I to attempt to give a summary of it. I may, however, briefly state that, according to Russian and English authorities, the Oxus formerly discharged itself into the Caspian by several different channels. That this river may originally have found its way into the Caspian Sea would appear to be more than probable, but it is open to much doubt at what exact period and under what circumstances its divergence into the Sea of Aral took place. I would, moreover, beg to point out that the statements of many of the travellers whose authority has been quoted have been derived rather from what they have heard than from personal observation. Dr. Sievers, however, who accompanied General Stebnitski in his expedition to the old bed in 1872, has given a minute account of the appearance of the channel lying east of the Great Balkan; while General Gluhofski has furnished an equally detailed account of that portion which lies between Kunya Urgendj and the salt lakes of Sari Kamish. Both of these gentlemen bear testimony to the existence of a channel varying in places from ½ a verst to a verst in breadth and from 25 to 120 feet in depth, but neither of them succeeded in discovering any signs of fresh-water shells or other such traces of the previous existence of a large river. Perhaps the most important survey yet made of the bed was that undertaken in 1876-77 by General Petroosevitch, who took levellings between Urgendj and Sari Kamish, showing a fall in the direction of the

latter of about 2½ to 3½ inches per mile. That the Sari Kamish lakes are lower than the present course of the Oxus there cannot be the slightest doubt, seeing that in 1849, and again in 1878, owing to the spring floods, the river forced its western bank and reached these lakes. The points to which I wish to draw especial attention with reference to this subject are (1) that it has been found that the surface of the waters of the Sari Kamish is 49 feet below the Caspian; and (2) that I was informed by an engineer who had taken part in the construction of the Transcaspian railway that, according to levellings he had taken, the bed of the Oxus at the point where it passes Aïdin (south-east of the Great Balkan) is more than 14 feet below that sea. In proof of the accuracy of the latter statement, I would beg to refer to the paper recently read at the Geographical Society at St. Petersburgh by M. Lessar, a Russian possessed of considerable scientific knowledge, with whom I had several opportunities of discussing the subject. Accepting these facts as correct, the theory advanced by the Russians that the divergence of the course of the Oxus into the Aral has not been in consequence of any upheaval of the desert, but of certain other natural causes, is seriously affected; and the hopes so confidently expressed by many of them of turning the stream back into its old bed, and of thus opening up a water communication between the Caspian and India, must entirely fall to the ground. Even supposing that the levellings taken near Aïdin are incorrect—an improbable hypothesis, seeing that the engineers could hardly have constructed the railway, which, as is well known, twice crosses the bed, without accurately estimating the levels—centuries would have to pass before such flat ground as that surrounding Sari Kamish could be flooded sufficiently to cause its waters to flow into the Caspian. An interesting pamphlet, recently published by a Russian named Dochtin, estimates the volume of water flowing past Nukus, the point where the delta of the Amou Daria commences, as follows :—

1874.	Million cubic Fathoms.	1875.	Million cubic Fathoms.	1876.	Million cubic Fathoms.
..	..	January	253	January	314
..	..	February	267	February	417
..	..	March	208	March	319
..	..	April	252	April	219
..	..	May	343	May	362
..	..	June	463	June	621
July	892	July	698	July	945
August	761	August	771	August	886
September	431	September	479	September	534
October	316	October	396	October	352
November	256	November	269	November	305
December	240	December	259	December	254
Total	2,896	..	4,658	..	5,528

Supposing, therefore, that by engineering skill the course of the Amou Daria could be diverted into the Sari Kamish, the maximum yearly volume of water which, according to this estimate, could possibly reach these lakes, would be 5,528 millions of cubic fathoms. But considering that it has been calculated that the Khivan Oasis absorbs in the month of July alone 300 millions of cubic fathoms of water drawn by irrigating canals from the Amou Daria previous to its reaching Nukus, some idea may be formed of the filtration and evaporation that would take place as the waters rose and extended over the almost flat districts surrounding the present basin.

As no levels have been taken of these districts, it is impossible to say what area the lake would cover before the surface rose the required number of feet. But judging from the descriptions given of that portion of the desert, the lake would have to assume a gigantic size before its waters could discharge into the Uzboi.

Taking all these facts into consideration, it is not, I think, unreasonable to presume that it would only be after the lapse of many decades, if not of centuries, that the desired result could be obtained. It is true that it has been proposed to overcome this difficulty by the construction of an artificial canal joining the Kunia Daria with the Uzboi, but the expense involved in such an undertaking would be so enormous, that it may be held to be unfeasible. Even admitting the possibility of the success of such a scheme, the fact of the Uzboi near Aïdin being more than 14 feet below the level of the Caspian presents further difficulties of so gigantic a nature

that, practically speaking, it would not be too much to say that the conveyance of the waters of the Amou Daria by buckets to the Caspian would be almost as feasible as the artificial construction of a water-course across the Central Asian desert.

In making the above remarks, I have relied on the data given me in Akhal—data which I have every reason to believe is accurate. I regret to say that I was unable to obtain any information as to the ultimate conclusions arrived at by the expedition, which had set out to explore the old bed of the Oxus shortly before my arrival.

On my return journey I had an opportunity of noticing the bed between Molla Kari and Balkan Bay. Here it presented an appearance rather of a dried-up arm of the sea than that of an estuary of a river. Moreover, from the accounts given me, the breadth of the bed south of the Great Balkan is in places so considerable, and the marine traces along that portion so evident, that it would be almost more reasonable to suppose that, if the Oxus ever flowed into the Caspian, it discharged its waters at some point much further east than the present littoral of that sea.

There is another point in connection with this question, with reference to which I would beg to say a few words.

It has been maintained by several writers that, in addition to the main stream disemboguing into Balkan Bay, a southern branch of the Oxus traversed the Kuren Dagh somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kizil-Arvat, and flowed past the ancient city of Mestorian. In the 5th chapter of the 1st volume of his travels, Conolly somewhat minutely describes a dried-up bed south-west of the Kuren Dagh, which he took to be the ancient course of the Oxus. "The soil," he says, "differed from that above, having gravel and pebbles, and against the right bank many large stones were collected, and the earth near it was coned up, as if by the strong force of water."

It is not unlikely that a dry watercourse similar to that described by Conolly may exist, but I would venture to submit that, situated as it is, it could only have been formed by some mountain torrent, seeing that it is quite impossible that it could be the bed of any branch of the Oxus. The Kuren and Kopet Mountains form one continuous range, there being no such break between them as that erroneously marked in the Russian and English maps. If a southern arm of the Oxus ever in reality existed, it must either have branched off to the north of the Little Balkan, or, like the Murghab and Tejend Rivers, have discharged its waters into the desert.

I was unable to gather any accurate information with regard to the rainfall in the Transcaspian province. As far as I could learn, no registration of meteorological facts has been made since the occupation of Akhal by the Russians. From the accounts given me by the Turkomans, I should say the rainfall was at times heavy, far exceeding that in the Khivan Oasis. The ground in Akhal being clayey the rain is not readily absorbed, often remaining in pools on the surface. As regards the temperature, I was told that the heat in summer during the day was overpowering, but that the nights were cool. A Polish physician, in charge of the military hospital at Michaelofsk, assured me that last August the thermometer had registered 36° Réaumur in his tent. The winter climate varies. In some years there is hardly any frost at all; in others the cold is so severe that Krasnovodsk Bay is occasionally frozen over. The winter of 1880-81 was an exceptionally mild one, the troops employed in the siege of Geuk-Tépé hardly requiring overcoats. On the other hand, this winter has been almost Siberian. The Michaelofski Gulf was frozen, the snow on the plain lay 2 to 3 feet deep in places, and the roads across the mountains were for weeks impassable. Although my thermometer never registered more than 17° Fahrenheit, the cold at the time of my return was so piercing, owing to the high wind blowing from the desert, and the drifts of snow so deep, that many must have perished.

Various accounts have been written of the habits and customs of the Turkomans generally, but no description has, I believe, been yet given of the camp-life of the Akhal-Téké division. I may, therefore, perhaps be permitted to give a brief sketch of the manner I was received, and of what I saw in one of their Settlements.

Although it was late in the evening when I drew near to the aoul of Kelet, the surrounding scene was perfectly distinct, owing to the light of a nearly full moon. The air was quite still, and an almost appalling silence prevailed. Stretching away to the east, like some gigantic ocean, lay the desert bathed in silvery rays, while to the west rose the bleak and grimly-shadowed heights of the Kopet Dagh. As I approached I could at first see nothing that indicated the presence of an encampment. At last I caught sight of a few willow trees, and then, as if by enchantment, there seemed to spring from the ground a mass of earth. As I drew closer this mass gradually assumed a definite shape. I could now see the bastions at its flanks, that its walls were of

clay, and a few minutes afterwards I found myself at the gateway of one of the mud strongholds, of which there are so many lying scattered over the oasis. Still no sign of life. At last, after the horses had been tethered, and as we were thinking of going in search of a few sticks for a fire, the silence was broken by the bark of a dog. A few minutes afterwards I discerned some small faces peeping from the gateway, then I heard some children's voices, and then issuing from the gateway there came a tall, imposing figure, followed by five or six children. This proved to be one of the Elders of the camp. He at once asked me to come to his tent, sending on one of the urchins to announce my arrival, or rather, as it turned out, to awaken the inmates. As I entered the kalé other Turkomans came to meet me with invitations to their tents, and the face of the Elder who had first spoken to me wore a comical expression of offended dignity as, embarrassed by so many pressing appeals, I was on the point of following a grey-bearded Chief who was more importunate than the others. Within the kalé there were some twenty tents pitched at irregular intervals to the right and left of a broad pathway. In one corner a camel was feeding, in another there were a few sheep, while midway between the lines stood a horse enveloped in felt clothing. The scene was so peaceful that one could hardly realize that, with homes such as this, the Turkomans could be the savage marauders that history has proved them to be. Still homelier was the scene within the Elder's tent as, later on, men and children gathered round the wood fire that was soon burning brightly in the centre. To my right was the Elder's wife, an attractive-looking woman of some 20 summers, with a dark complexion, irregular features, and soft, merry eyes. Her manners were not in the least constrained, as she busied herself in preparing a greasy pilaf, which she mixed with her hands in a large wooden bowl. Nor was she in the least bashful. Occasionally glancing inquisitively at the preparations I was making for an evening meal, she kept up a lively conversation with her other visitors. When the pilaf had been properly mixed she rose, and addressing to me a few simple words of excuse, took up the bowl and left the tent, with a view, I was informed, of offering some supper to a sick neighbour. Most pressing were the invitations to stay the night, and many the delicacies I was offered by the good housewife as an inducement to stop. I was to have a carpet and felt rugs to sleep upon, embroidered saddle-bags for my pillow, and butter-milk and freshly-made bread for my breakfast in the morning. Indeed, so convivial and homely were the surroundings, and the Elder and his wife appeared so disappointed at my leaving, that, had I not been anxious to push onwards as quickly as possible, I would willingly have remained with them a few days.

It must not, however, be presumed that in describing the above scene I would wish to imply that the Akhal Tékés are less savage and predatory than the Mervis, Salors, Goklans, &c. On the contrary, the information I collected tended rather to show that they were, if possible, greater robbers and cut-throats than the latter. They all spoke with savage glee of the raids they had taken part in, and boasted of the number of Persians they had killed. It was amusing, too, to see how their attention at once became absorbed when shown a knife or some other arm. Even Takhma Sirdar, who since his visit to Europe affects to be partially civilized, spoke with unconcealed enthusiasm of his past exploits, and a Turkoman, notorious for the signal ferocity of his forays, was pointed out to me as an exceptionally fine fellow. Reflections have been cast by some authors on the bravery of the Turkomans, it being held that they are adverse to fighting in the open, and that the success of their alamans was owing to the cowardice of their foes rather than to their own prowess. After the events of Geuk-Tépé it would be impossible that such opinions could any longer be entertained. Judging from the accounts given me of this siege, the defence of the Turkomans was heroic in the extreme, the courage of the women equalling that of the men. The Tékés are fine, muscular men of medium height, with yellowish complexions, high cheek-bones, and irregular features. On the other hand, strange to say, some of their faces have a decidedly Jewish cast. Their dress consists of a loose garment reaching below the knee and bound *tight* round the waist by a long woollen or cloth sash, of a huge yellow or black sheep-skin cap, shoes, and drawers. The women do not conceal their faces. When young, they have bright, merry features, good figures, and soft eyes. The old women are hideous. They all wear long shifts or chemises made mostly of cotton, the maidens wearing round embroidered caps and plaiting their hair.

As regards the origin of the Akhal Tékés, I could learn nothing positive. According to Takhma Sirdar, they originally lived on the banks of the Amou Daria between Khiva and Bokhara. They then, it would appear, migrated across the desert to the neighbourhood of the Balkans, but finding the soil there completely barren, and

that there was almost an absolute dearth of water, they returned to their former homes. Soon afterwards (*i.e.*, about 130 years ago), hearing that there was a fertile tract of land at the foot of the Kopet Dagh, they again set out, and eventually reaching Geuk-Tépé pitched their camps there. The origin of the name Akhal is involved in even still more obscurity. Some of the Turkomans pretended that it was derived from a camp that previously existed between Kizil-Arvat and Durrun, while others asserted that it had been the name of the original Chief of the tribe. The Téké language closely resembles the Tartar dialects of the Caucasus, the pronunciation being somewhat harder.

I found the tents of the Turkomans as warm and comfortable as they have been represented to be. They have been so frequently described that any further account of them would be superfluous. It may be desirable, however, to say a few words with reference to their horses, of which I saw many fine specimens. The usual height of their horses is about 15½ to 16 hands. The neck is long and slender, the head large, the chest narrow, the body somewhat clumsy, and the legs long. Nevertheless, their general appearance is noble and commanding, and they are full of spirit and endowed with considerable speed. A Turkoman told me that he thought nothing of riding his horse from Bami to Askabad (a distance of more than 150 versts) between sunrise and sunset, and numerous other anecdotes were related to me of the marvellous endurance of these horses. They are usually fed on barley, yundja (a kind of clover), and chopped straw. Their price varies. Since the Russian occupation a fine three-year-old will fetch 500 roubles. At Kezandjik I was shown a wild ass which had lately been captured in the desert. He was about as big as a small Shetland pony, with a thick woolly coat, and short ears, at least for a donkey.

The insects and reptiles in Akhal are prodigious, the tarantulas being particularly large, and the lizard sometimes measuring 2 to 3 feet in length. I saw quantities of birds, larks, grey crows, eagles, vultures, hawks, bustards, partridges, pin-tailed grouse, besides one or two flamingoes on the shore of the Caspian.

The Akhal Tékés are not at all fanatical. The women enjoy considerable liberty and influence, being frequently consulted in matters connected with the camp. Shortly previous to my arrival at Kizil-Arvat there had been a social convulsion in the aoul, owing to the women insisting on the recent appointment of an unpopular Chief Elder being revoked.

As is well known, the Turkomans are Sunnis. The Ishans or priests are few in number, and have but little influence over the people. At Annaù I was shown a Turkoman place of worship. It was a very primitive edifice, being nothing more than a mud hut containing a low-roofed room about 15 feet long, on one side of which there was a kind of alcove, where, I was told, the Ishans read passages from the Koran. The few religious books I met with were in Arabic, and had apparently come from Bokhara.

In conclusion, I would add that there are many points connected with the geography and history of Akhal on which I have refrained from touching in the present Report, the above being merely a summary of a more exhaustive paper I hope to have the honour of shortly submitting to the Geographical Society.

(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

Tehran, May 12, 1882.

No. 40.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 10, 1882.

ONE of the daily papers here publishes a telegram from Moscow, dated the 6th instant, announcing that the "Moscow Gazette" states that an official will be sent by the Governor-General of Turkestan to Cabul, in order to negotiate with the Ameer for regulating commercial intercourse between Russia and Afghanistan.

I have to instruct your Excellency to call the attention of M. de Giers to this statement. You will inform his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government presume there is no foundation for it, as such a proceeding as is represented to be intended would be in contravention of the understanding existing between the Government of the Queen and the Government of the Emperor of Russia.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 41.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 13, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an interesting article from the "Invalide Russe" of the 18th (30th) June last, which gives an account of a journey made by M. Lessar, one of the engineers employed by the Russian Government last autumn in making surveys of the country from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad and Sarakhs, with a view to the extension of the railway at least to Askabad, and perhaps to Sarakhs. It appears that M. Lessar was instructed to make the survey as far as the latter place, and that he actually went there.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWARD THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of June 18 (30), 1882.

(Translation.)

THE "Invalide Russe" of the 18th (30th) June last contains the following article which it reproduced from the proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society, descriptive of the route from Askabad to Sarakhs. The author of the article is M. Lessar, one of the Government engineers employed last autumn in making surveys of the country with a view to the extension of the Transcaspian railway to Askabad:—

"By the middle of the month of September 1881 the construction of the Transcaspian Military Railway from Mikhailofsky Bay to Kizil-Arvat was completed; although the immediate extension of this line was not contemplated, it was nevertheless decided to make surveys of the country as far as Askabad, and, so far as possible, beyond to Sarakhs. A portion of the country south-east of Askabad presented features of special interest on account of its being almost completely unknown.

"Surveying operations are best conducted in the Turkoman country during the months of September and October. The temperature is then cool and the sky generally clouded. The nights begin to be cold only early in November. The months of March and April and the beginning of May are less convenient for this work in consequence of the cold nights that are then prevalent. Notwithstanding this, surveying operations can only be conducted at that season in the arid portions of the Steppes. In the months of September and October rain falls but seldom, and the level of water in the rivulets and wells is at its lowest, while the pits containing rain-water become perfectly dry. The most abundant rainfalls occur early in spring, when the Steppes can be conveniently traversed in all directions.

"The military escort of the surveying party consisted of twenty-one Cossacks and one officer. Nine Russian workmen and two overseers were engaged for the heavy manual labour connected with levelling and surveying. The guide was a Merv Téké, taken from the Téké militia at Askabad. He formerly resided at Merv, and enjoyed the reputation of a brave man and celebrated leader of robber bands; at the same time, he was well acquainted with the roads. There were also two interpreters, one a Kurd, who had been as a prisoner in Merv, and who spoke the dialect well; and the other was a Russian Tartar soldier from Khosan, whose native language closely resembled that spoken by the Tékés.

"The surveying operations were commenced early in October.

"The road from Askabad to Annaù is level throughout, with the exception of a few sand-hillocks, which extend for about 300 fathoms and occur on the 10th verst. Annaù consists of an old dilapidated fort standing on a high mound and of some Téké encampments; the 'auls,' or encampments, are at a distance of 3 versts from the sands, while the fort, standing separately with its surrounding extensive ruins, which are spread along a small rivulet, is situated on a level plain nearer to the mountains. The fort is almost uninhabited, and there are only a few houses within the walls; nearly the whole population of the place lives in the encampment. Annaù is the only settlement along the whole line of country from Mikhailofsky Bay in which anything approaching a work of art is to be found. Here occur the ruins of a mosque, many of the towers of which have fallen; the walls and foundation are full of fissures, but the exterior façade of glazed tiles of a very fine pattern is in a good state of preservation,

The imposing size and good proportions of all the parts of the building raise it in architectural respects above all other structures met with in the Téké Steppes. As far as Giaurs the natives almost live exclusively in tents. Commencing from Bami and towards Askabad ruins of mud houses are met with, though in inconsiderable numbers; tombs constructed of sunburnt bricks are more frequently seen; they are all in the shape of ugly square structures crowned with a cupola, all smeared with clay. Near the mosque on the summit of a mound there is a deep well.

"For a distance of 20 versts between Annaù and Giaurs the road runs along a smooth, gentle declivity, and the remaining 10 versts of the road are intersected by sand-hillocks, which occur midway here, and which approach the hills. This is the only place along the whole line from Askabad to Sarakhs where, in constructing the railway, it would be necessary to make use of the shovel.

"There are three fortified places at Gavars: the upper fort, which is occupied by thirty Téké habitations, consisting of mud huts, occupying the middle of the fort; the middle fortification, which is held by forty Russian Djigits; and the lower fort, which is deserted and in a ruinous condition. During the progress of the survey between Askabad and Gavars caravans of Tékés were met with returning to Akhal from Merv and Tejend.

"The distance between Gavars and Baba-Durmaz is 30 versts, and the country appears to the eye to be quite flat; in reality, however, it consists of gentle declivities and ascents of the mountain-spurs. The water at Baba-Durmaz is conducted by a canal from a mountain stream. It is slightly salt, but men and horses drink it readily. It is also used for irrigating small fields in the neighbourhood of the old fortifications.

"The road from Baba-Durmaz traverses country similar in character to that above described, the only difference being that it is here covered with thick brushwood; the ground is honeycombed with holes of different animals, so that not only horses, but even men, fall through into these subterranean passages. Sand-hills begin to make their appearance on the 10th verst, as do also ruins of forts and watch-towers. Here, as also in Akhal, a watch-tower was a short time ago the necessary appurtenance of every field. The towers are either round or square, with a small aperture at the base sufficiently large to admit the passage of a human body. When robbers appeared on the scene the people working in the fields crawled into the tower, and closing the entrance to it with heavy stones, remained in these places of refuge until the marauders disappeared.

"Robberies are of less frequent occurrence now than formerly, and the towers are consequently not kept in repair. The atmosphere has a very destructive effect on buildings that are not constantly repaired; they rapidly crumble away, and in a short time present the appearance of a mound of greater or smaller dimensions.

"The whole distance from Baba-Durmaz to Luftabad is 22 versts; a small fortification, called Artyk, is encountered at a distance of 16 versts. From this point the country is cultivated, fields spreading on both sides of the road as far as Luftabad. There are no bridges over the 'aryks,' or irrigating canals. At two places there are primitive bridges, but their condition is such as to render them useless to travellers. Four fortified places, viz., Kale-mir, Shor-Kale, Luftabad, and Kuren, exist on the Durunger River, after its issue out of the Deregez. The two extreme fortifications are situated on mounds, and are seen from afar. The middle forts are surrounded by such luxuriant gardens that they only appear in sight at a distance of about 50 fathoms.

"At Kuren the inhabitants are Aleilis. Shar-Kala, Kaleh-mir, and Luftabad are inhabited by Persians, who lead a settled mode of life; there are no tents here, and all the people live in mud houses erected inside the forts, the latter being in appearance similar to all Téké structures of that kind: they have a quadrangular shape and are surrounded by a high wall; a bazaar extends along the sides of the only broad street in the place; from the bazaar narrow, dirty lanes, often shut off from each other by gates, run in different directions. The bazaar of Kuren is considered by the people of the Atek to be one of considerable importance.

"The country between Luftabad and Kaakhka—an extent of 30 versts—forms the most fertile and cultivated part of the Attek; here there is an abundance of water along the whole route. In point of density of population the country resembles that between Akhal and Geuk-Tépé. The road is frequently intersected by streams and 'aryks,' which are not bridged, and consequently impede the progress of the traveller. To the north of the road the whole country is overgrown with reeds and bushes, and vegetation becomes more and more luxuriant as the country recedes from the mountains; this continues to the Tejend River.

"Along the whole extent of road from Luftabad to Kaakhka settlements occur; at first these villages stretch in single line, developing further on into settlements consisting of two and three rows of habitations. In addition to these villages, there are many ruins of deserted forts. Some of these are built on the level plain, while others stand on detached hillocks, which frequently occur between Kodcha and Askabad, and beyond to Sarakhs. These mounds are evidently of artificial origin; they rise from a perfectly level plain, and the ground slopes in every direction from the mounds, in consequence, probably, of the land having been excavated all round for the purpose of raising these mounds, which are generally situated near streams and in places adapted for settlements. The mounds are sometimes of circular shape, and occasionally of elliptical or some fantastic form; they are generally 6, 7, and more fathoms high, and not infrequently are 50 fathoms in diameter; their slopes are generally abrupt.

"At Kaakhka, as in most of the settlements, there is a new fort which is inhabited, and also some empty ruins. After the assault and capture of a fort, the natives generally do not repair their old strongholds, but erect new ones. New Kaakhka stands on a natural elevation of ground; on the summit of this rises another mound with an inaccessible citadel; the place presents a ruinous appearance, though still imposing from afar. New Kaakhka is the most considerable village along the whole route, and contains as many as 600 habitations. The Elders exaggerate the number of these to 1,500. The inhabitants are Aleili Turkomans who fled from Khiva after their defeat by the Russian troops. The new fort was built five years ago, while the old fortification has been abandoned for about a century, when the Aleilis migrated to Khiva.

"At Kaakhka the report of the Merv Turkomans having gone on a plundering expedition was confirmed. At Luftabad information had been obtained to that effect. It was not, however, known whether raids would be directed against one single point, or whether several such would be simultaneously attacked; nor could it be ascertained in which direction the marauding expedition had started. In view of these rumours, the plan of surveying operations was somewhat changed. Up to Gavars the surveying party was not protected by any escort; between Gavars and Kaakhka five Cossacks were told off to protect the members of the expedition; the remaining Cossacks proceeded with the baggage from one village to another by the shortest road, and were joined at the end of the day by the surveyors. On reaching Kaakhka it was decided, in view of the possibility of encountering the marauders, to move forward in one body.

"From Kaakhka the advance was through a country completely unknown, and of which there was no map in existence. At first the road crossed an inconsiderable spur of the mountains by easy ascents and descents. After bending round this spur, three mounds appear in view, with a ruined fort standing between them; this fort, called Kara-Kala, belongs to one of the Merv Khans of that name. On the map of the 20 versts to 1 inch scale this fort is placed on the road to Sarakhs, whereas, in reality, it is situated several versts to the northward. The map of the country beyond may generally be said to be founded on hearsay, and therefore not very correct; this applies specially to the line of country from Kaakhka to Sarakhs, which runs, according to the map, almost from west to east, whereas its true bearings are 55° south-east.

"At 19 versts from Kaakhka is the village of Hodjamed; the inhabitants are Tékés, the fort is in ruins, and water is only procurable at about ½ a verst from it. The population has settled nearer to the mountains, and are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Hodjamed lies in a depression, and is only visible from a short distance. At a distance of 1½ versts from it are the ruins of Sermechit, situated on a high mound, and visible from afar.

"From Hodjamed to Dushak, over an extent of 20 versts, the road runs over a perfectly level open locality, from which Dushak is visible at a distance of 18 versts. The ground is burrowed in every direction by different animals. Proceeding southward from Kaakhka there are numerous porcupine holes. Of more frequent occurrence are white ant-hills; these are met with throughout the whole Caspian region—in this particular part they are especially plentiful. Along the line of Transcaspian Railway these white ants attack the timber work. As yet the sleepers have not been touched by them, probably owing to the vibration produced by the passing trains, which prevents them from adhering to the sleepers.

"At a distance of 2 versts from Hodjamed the road runs past a mound, and on the 12th verst a ruined fort is observed.

"Dushak and Chardeh consist of four fortified places constructed close to each other. Three are situated south of the road, on a gently sloping declivity; the fourth fort lies north of the road on a high artificial mound. This fort stands on the bank of a stream which flows from the Kelat Mountains. The stream is of considerable breadth, and rushes noisily over a gravelly bed; its breadth in winter is 2 fathoms, and its depth from 0·15 to 0·30 fathom. Its banks are about 2 fathoms high; but, being sloping, they are easily ascended and descended. During heavy rain the river leaves its bed; but even at the highest water-level it does not reach the Tejend. Around Dushak, and in addition to Chardeh-Tépé, on which the above fort is situated, there are several other considerable mounds. Along the road from Dushak to Mehneh ruins, a distance of 40 versts, no river or well is met with; the ravine that intersects the road midway along this distance contains water only after a heavy rainfall; the nearest stream is found in the mountains, at a distance of about 18 versts south of the road. The road here runs along level ground almost devoid of vegetation. Cultivated fields are met with at a distance of about 5 versts before reaching Mehneh ruins, and continue to extend for the same distance beyond these ruins, or to Mehneh and Ermaly Forts, which are now occupied by Tékés. The ruins of Old Mehneh occupy a considerable extent of ground. The new forts of Mehneh and Ermaly have a somewhat numerous population; in the first there are about 100 houses, and in the latter 150. The size of the Mehneh stream is about the same as that of Dushak.

"From the ruins of Mehneh, in the direction of the new fortification, the road bends almost due south, and then to the south-east to Chacha Fort, the character of the country being the same over a distance of 15 versts. On receding from the mountains and approaching the Tejend, almost impenetrable bushes and reeds are encountered.

"The road to Chacha trends past several mounds and two forts. Chacha is a small fort, the few remaining portions of the walls of which are in ruins. The inhabitants are Tékés, who occupy about thirty houses, and are employed in agriculture. Cotton is the plant principally cultivated. The Chacha rivulet has high banks; its breadth is about 2 fathoms, with a depth of from 0·30 to 0·40 fathom. Like the Dushak and Mehneh Rivers, its greatest overflow does not reach the Tedjent. The best road from Sarakhs to Kelat passes through Chacha and Karateken. The road from Meshed to Kelat, viâ Allah-Akber, is impassable for carts, and therefore all traffic on wheels between these two points must be directed through Sarakhs and Karateken. The road from Chacha to Sarakhs is 55 versts in length, and traverses a perfectly level country. At a distance of 20½ versts from Chacha is the artificial rain-water hole or reservoir called Kalchooz, now almost altogether filled up with earth. There is a small mound near this water-hole, formed of the ruins of Robat, which formerly stood here.

"Midway, *i.e.*, on the 28th verst from Chacha, and near Khan-Ghiran Mountain, the route is intersected by the road leading from Merv to Meshed. The road from the 30th to the 36th verst passes over ground the surface of which is covered with hillocks and small mounds of sandy clay, about 1 fathom high. This place is called Cherkezli. The bushes seldom exceed a man's height, and nowhere are they particularly thick. The progress of the baggage-cart between the mounds and hillocks was impeded by the narrowness of the beaten path. The nature of the ground is favourable for locomotion. After leaving this undulating country the bushes disappear, and the ground becomes covered with rank grass and prickly shrubs. On the 13th verst from Sarakhs a large mound, called Kendekli, is passed on the right.

"Sarakhs is an extensively fortified place, occupied by one battalion (about 700 men) of Persian infantry. The fields and vegetable-gardens are within the walls. The neighbourhood of Sarakhs was always the favourite marauding-ground of the Merv Tékés, and the Persians dare not venture beyond the walls of the town. The Commandant, in his excursions to places 5 or 6 versts distant, is accompanied by an escort of not less than fifty horsemen.

"The place is surrounded by high thick walls and a deep ditch. Of course the Tékés have never attempted to take Sarakhs. Such a feat was never necessary. The soldiers of the garrison inspired them with no fear, as these warriors never ventured to proceed to the assistance of caravans, which were robbed with impunity under the walls of the town. The soldiers have such dread of the Tékés that, fearing the darkness, they kindle fires during the night on the top of the watch-towers, of which there are twenty-four within the walls. The armament of the fortifications consists of six old guns; the artillerymen are ignorant of their duties; they are never

exercised or drilled, and since the construction of the fortress the guns have never been discharged.

"The bed of the Tejend at Sarakhs, or the Sarakhs Daria, is dry during the greater part of the year; its breadth is from ¼ to ¾ verst, and in some places even more. Generally speaking, the river contains water only after a heavy fall of rain or after the thawing of snow in the mountains. At such times the lower course of the Tedjent to the northward of Sarakhs is filled with water, as are also the artificial lakes in which water is collected by the construction of dams for purposes of irrigation.

"Sarakhs is supplied with water: firstly, from wells inside the walls—water is procured at a depth of 20 feet (water is obtained at the same depth on the other side of the Tejend); and, secondly, by an 'aryk,' or canal, 14 versts long, conducted out of parts of the Tejend in which water is always to be found. At a distance of 16 versts from Dowletabad, dams have been constructed for the purpose of making the water flow into the 'aryk;' in this manner it flows in a narrow stream to Kale-No and Sarakhs.

"The survey of the ground for the railway and the exploring expeditions made in connection with that work resulted, in addition to the acquisition of special data, in the elucidation of the general character of the interior of the country, commencing from the Caspian. It was ascertained that there was no general ascent along the whole of the surveyed route. At Aidan many places are below the level of the Caspian, and all the country from the coast to the wells at the former place cannot be regarded as the dry bed of a river, but as once forming an inlet of the sea, a part of which, namely, that near the present coast, is being silted up by sand, while the depressions of the country beyond are being gradually levelled with the surrounding land by the detritus of the Greater and Smaller Balkans. From Aidan the railway runs along a mountain slope, and as the line approaches the hills small ascents occur, with corresponding descents as the railway recedes to the plain. There is no general elevation from the Caspian. Judging from the character of the locality, it is very probable that levellings made from the Téké oasis, in the direction of Khiva and Bokhara, would establish the existence of several places between these points with a level below that of the Caspian, as it was discovered to be the case at the Sara Kamish depression. Such levelling would also prove the erroneousness of the opinion now entertained by some persons of the fall of the Murgab and Tedjent into the Oxus, and would further show that these rivers at one time disembogued into the Caspian, when that sea had not receded to its present limits. Geological investigations made in connection with a survey of the country might also result in an explanation of the existence of various hollows and ravines which are at present regarded as the beds of old rivers.

"The surveying expedition returned to Askabad by way of Ak-Derbent, Meshed, the Allah-Akber Pass, and Mohamedabad. Two roads lead from Sarakhs to Meshed; one across the Muzderan Hills, which is the most frequented, in consequence of its comparative safety; although this road has been broadened and cleared, it yet presents obtacles for the passage of carts. The other road runs along the Heri-Rud and Keshef-Rud, and has not yet been cleared; its conversion into a good cart-road would not be attended with any difficulties, as no hills in the neighbourhood of the river occur along it. At present it is only used for the passage of pack-animals."

No. 42.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July 13, 1882.*

DURING a visit which I paid to M. de Giers yesterday, I called his Excellency's attention to an announcement stated to have been made in the "Moscow Gazette" that an Agent had been sent by the Governor-General of Turkestan to Cabul, with a view to entering into commercial arrangements with the Ameer of Afghanistan, and I stated that I could not suppose that there was any foundation for this assertion, as it would be in contravention of the understanding which existed between the two Governments with regard to Afghanistan.

M. de Giers assured me that there was no truth whatever in the statement; indeed, he said, there was at this moment no Governor-General in Turkestan. General Tchernaieff had been appointed to that post, but had not yet started to take possession of it, nor would he do so for some time to come, for a Commission had been named to

examine into the administration of that country, which had been carried on in a somewhat irregular manner. M. de Giers' brother is the President of this Commission, which his Excellency said would not return for some time. General Tchernaieff would wish not to leave St. Petersburgh till this Commission should make its Report, and till he should come to an agreement with his Government as to the reforms which should be made in the administration of the affairs of Turkestan. But M. de Giers assured me that the General would go there with the most peaceable intentions, and with strict instructions to have no intercourse whatever with the Ruler or authorities of Afghanistan.

In the meantime, and since the death of General Kaufmann, the Government of Turkestan is being administered by General Kolpakowsky, who M. de Giers assured me is a most discreet officer, and his Excellency did not think it possible that he could have transgressed the instructions of which he was in possession by taking such a step as that announced by the "Moscow Gazette."

I have not yet been able to discover the number of that newspaper in which the above statement was made.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 43.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received by telegraph, July* 25.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, July* 25, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship certain documents which show that the Russians are endeavouring to procure the submission of the Merv Turkomans.

Two of them are letters from General Aminoff, Chief of the Staff at Askabad, and recently in charge of the Akhal Téké Government during General Röhrberg's absence, addressed to the Chiefs of Merv, assuring them of the satisfaction with which the Russian authorities in the Transcaspian Province had heard that the Merv tribes had sent a deputation to Petro-Alexandrofsk to claim the friendship and protection of Russia.

The third paper is the original Convention, signed by Colonel Grotekilm, Governor of the Amou Daria Province, and fourteen Elders deputed by the Ottemish branch of the Téké Turkomans of Merv to visit Petro-Alexandrofsk and communicate with the Russian authorities there.

This Convention comprises six Articles, containing the following stipulations:—

1. Russia engages not to interfere with the religion, customs, or form of government existing among the Turkomans of Merv, not to appoint any authorities over them, and not to levy taxes. To afford them the same protection on Russian territory as is afforded to the subjects of Bokhara and Khiva.

2. The Turkomans engage to cease for ever plundering the caravans and inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of Persia, and to punish those who transgress this Agreement, restitution of property being also promised, or compensation to be afforded; in such cases the Chiefs being bound to carry out unconditionally the demands of the Russian authorities.

3. Russian Agents to be from time to time received at Merv, and special Envoys to be sent by Chiefs to the Russian Commandant on the Oxus.

4. Russian caravans to be protected on their passage through Merv territory, and no taxes to be levied beyond that now charged under the title of "baj."

5. Agents of other Powers not to be permitted to visit Merv.

6. Turkomans to provide horses and escorts for couriers sent by Russians to Khiva, Tashkend, and other places.

The Turkoman Elders who negotiated this Convention do not appear to have been Chiefs of note or influence, and they only represented the Ottemish portion of the Téké tribe. The Convention which they signed would appear not to have been adopted by the people of Merv, and negotiations are now being carried on between the Merv Chiefs and a Khivan Agent with the object seemingly of making an indirect offer of their submission to Russia by the tender of their allegiance to the Khan of Khiva.

The Treaty signed by Colonel Grotekilm was concluded on the 28th October last. Mr. Wyndham reported in his despatch of the 15th June, 1881, that M. de Giers

informed him there was no question of negotiating a Treaty with the Merv Turkomans, and that Baron Jomini had also stated that there were no formal negotiations going on for a Treaty with the Turkomans of that place.

Inclosure 1 in No. 43.

Colonel Aminoff to the Khans of Merv.

(Translation.) *Askabad, September* , 1881.

To the Exalted and Most Honourable Khans and Elders of Merv.

THE Russian Governor of Turkomania and Commander-in-chief of the troops therein has duly received your letter, and is rejoiced that the Mervis have at last awoke to their true interests, and have decided to solicit our friendship, and seek the protection of our Czar.

The General fully approves of your intention to send twenty-four Elders of the Tochtemish Turkomans to the Commandant on the Amou Daria, by way of Khiva.

On his part, my Chief to-day received twenty-four Elders of the Ottemish Turkomans, and listened attentively to all they had to say, addressing kind words to them, and promising them the friendship and protection of the Russian Empire. Thus all the Turkomans will enjoy Russian protection, and live happily and peacefully. So long as it may please the Turkomans they will experience nothing but friendship and kindness at the hands of the Russians. The Turkomans of Merv will be at liberty to travel freely through our territory, where every assistance will be rendered them in the discharge of their affairs.

All this I write by order of my Chief, and I am delighted that so agreeable a duty has fallen to my lot.

(Signed) Baron AMINOFF, *Chief of the Staff, &c.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 43.

Colonel Aminoff to the Khans of Merv.

(Translation.) *September* 3 (15), 1881.

To the Most Honourable Khans and Elders of Merv.

MY Chief, General Röhrberg, has duly received your letter reporting that the Russian soldier had been sent to the Commandant on the Amou Daria, and that twenty-four Elders had likewise gone thither, and is much pleased at the news.

(Signed) Colonel AMINOFF, *Chief of the Staff.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 43.

Convention concluded between Russians and Ottemish Turkomans of Merv.

(Translation.)

Convention concluded between the Governor of Amou Daria Province and the Turkoman Elders of the Ottemish Tribe, who have arrived from Merv with a view of seeking the Protection of Russia.

THE Undersigned, the Governor of the Amou Daria Province of the Russian Empire, Colonel Grotekilm, in virtue of the full powers set forth in the instructions issued to him of the 25th September (7th October), 1881, by the Governor-General of Turkestan and the Representatives of the Ottemish Turkomans of Merv, Nazar Khan Beg, Mahomed Khan, Mahomed Berdi Khan, and eleven other Elders, viz., Jari, Batirr, Aitkurban Soufi, Jari Khan, Berk Ali Khan, Nafass Beg, Sovin Khan Beg, Khalmurad Beg, Eskender Beg, Kurban Nazar Pehlivan, Jari Beg, Geldi, who have come to the Amou Daria Province with a view of seeking the high protection of the Emperor of All the Russias, in virtue of full powers given them by the Ottemish tribe of Turkomans, as set forth in a letter to the Khan of Khiva, have, for the purpose of complying with the above-mentioned request of the Turkoman people, agreed upon the following Articles:—

ARTICLE I.

The Russian Government, in signing this Agreement with a view of meeting the wishes of the Ottemish tribe, engage not to interfere with the religion, customs, or form of government existing among the Turkomans of the said tribe, and not to appoint any authorities over them, nor levy any taxes. They moreover engage to afford them the same protection on Russian territory as is afforded to the subjects of the Ameer of Bokhara and the Khan of Khiva.

ARTICLE II.

The Ottemish Turkomans enter into a solemn engagement with the Russian Government to cease for ever pillaging and plundering the caravans and inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of Persia, and, in the event of such acts being committed, to punish the delinquents and restore the plunder, or, should they be unable to do this, to fully compensate the sufferers. In such cases the Khans are bound to carry out unconditionally the demands of the Russian authorities.

ARTICLE III.

To receive with proper respect such persons as may from time to time be sent to Merv on the part of the Russian authorities, and, on their side, to send special Envoys to the Commandant on the Amou Daria.

ARTICLE IV.

The Turkomans engage to protect the Russian commercial and other caravans passing through Merv to Khiva, Bokhara, and Persia, and not to levy any tax on them over and above that levied under the title of "badj," without first coming to an agreement with the (Russian) Governor.

ARTICLE V.

The Turkomans are not to allow Agents of other Powers to visit them.

ARTICLE VI.

The Turkomans engage to provide horses and escorts, at a fixed price, for the couriers who may be sent by the Russian authorities to Khiva, Tashkend, and other places.

The present Convention, drawn up in the Russian and Turkoman languages, and signed and sealed by the Contracting Parties, will be forwarded to the Governor-General of Turkestan for submission to the Emperor, and a certified copy thereof will be given to the Governor of the Amou Daria Province, as likewise to the Turkoman Elders of the Ottemish tribe.

Done on the 16th (28th) October, in the year of our Lord 1881, which corresponds to the Mahommedan date of 5 Zilhedjé, 1298.

(L.S.) (Signed) GROTEKILM, *Colonel*,
Governor-General of the Amou Daria Province.

No. 44.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 3, 1882.

I APPROVE the language held by your Excellency to M. de Giers, as reported in your despatch of the 13th instant, with reference to a rumour that the Russian authorities in Turkestan had dispatched an Agent to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 45.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 2, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "St. Petersburgh Vedomosti" of the 18th (30th) July, 1882, states that the Transcaspian region is to include the former Transcaspian military circuit, the territory of the Téké Turkomans, and all the islands along that portion of the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea belonging to the region. The Chief of the Caucasian military circuit will be Chief Administrator of the Transcaspian, and the local Administration is to be placed in the hands of a senior official, who will also command the local troops.

The Transcaspian region is to be divided into three districts: Mangyshlak, Krasnovodsk, and Akhal Téké; these districts will be administered by Chiefs of districts. The town of Askabad will be the chief administrative centre. The district Chief of Akhal Téké will reside at Askabad; of Krasnovodsk, at the town of that name; and of Mangyshlak, at Fort Alexander.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 46.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 7, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an abstract, published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 5th instant, of an article in the "Novoe Vremya," relating to the Regulation recently issued for the administration of the Transcaspian territory.

It admits the importance of that territory since the annexation of the Akhal Téké oasis. At the same time it confesses that the commercial importance of the latter is not great, and that the attempt to establish trading relations with Merv has been a failure. But politically it considers the Transcaspian region of the greatest interest, and strongly recommends that the authorities should do their utmost to conciliate the Tékés and to inspire them with confidence in the Russian Government. It suggests that finally this region should be incorporated with the Government of Turkestan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of July 23 *and* 24 (*August* 4 *and* 5), 1882.

A PROPOS du réglement temporaire d'administration du territoire Trans-Caspien qui vient d'être promulgué, le "Nouveau Temps" jette un coup d'œil sur la situation de cette contrée. Celle-ci n'a acquis de l'importance pour nous, dit-il, que depuis l'annexion de l'oasis d'Akhal-Téké et la conséquence la plus immédiate de ce fait consiste dans nos relations avec la Perse. Les populations Kurdes du nord de ce pays ont perdu leur ancienne importance comme garde militaire; les occupations pacifiques leur sont devenues désormais complètement accessibles. La Perse modifiera sans doute progressivement le caractère administratif de ses provinces septentrionales et nos rapports avec elle deviendront plus étroits: il ne dépendra que des diplomates Persans de les rendre les plus sincères et les plus avantageux possibles pour les deux pays.

L'importance commerciale de l'oasis d'Akhal-Téké n'est pas considérable, vu qu'elle ne se trouve pas sur une route commerciale et que ni sa population clairsemée ni la production locale ne sont de nature à y assurer le développement futur du commerce. Les premières tentatives de nouer des relations commerciales avec Merv ont échoué et, eussent-elles réussi, elles n'auraient en tout cas point eu grande importance.

En ce qui concerne notre politique intérieure, bien que la population de l'oasis ne soit pas nombreuse et qu'on ne puisse espérer qu'elle s'accroisse, à cause de l'insuffi-

sance de terre et d'eau, l'Administration voit s'ouvrir pour elle dans ce pays un vaste champ d'activité.

Les Tékés sont un peuple non corrompu, fidèle à sa parole et à l'équité. Mais comme il est évident qu'ils doivent garder de la méfiance à l'égard des Russes, il faut se préoccuper tout d'abord d'établir des relations régulières en vue d'un apaisement complet, avec justice et sévérité là où percent la trahison et l'arrière-pensée. Il faut, comme l'a dit Scobéleff, que les fonctionnaires se tiennent moins dans les Chancelleries et qu'ils soient accessibles à chacun; qu'ils étudient en un mot le peuple et ses besoins. En Asie l'encre et le papier n'ont rien à faire là où se trouvent engagés des intérêts matériels. Il faut surtout agir avec prudence, en évitant des erreurs comme celles qui ont été commises dans l'Administration du Turkestan. Outre la réduction du nombre des fonctionnaires et la suppression d'un vain formalisme incompréhensible pour le peuple, il importe que l'on résolve régulièrement dès le principe la question des impôts et du commerce. L'expérience a démontré que le principe Musulman de la perception des impôts proportionnellement à l'avoir de chacun prédomine en Asie. Toute contribution extraordinaire doit être évitée comme illégale. Enfin, moins il y aura de fonctionnaires superflus, plus les dépenses diminueront dans l'intérêt commun.

Le territoire Trans-Caspien est partagé en trois districts: ceux de Manguischlak, de Krasnovodsk, et d'Akhal-Téké. Une certaine indépendance d'action est réservée au Gouverneur, qui ne relève que pour les cas importants du Commandant supérieur de la circonscription du Caucase, par l'entremise duquel sont présentés les comptes rendus annuels sur la situation du pays et des troupes, ainsi que les projets ultérieurs. La subordination au Caucase était motivée autrefois par l'exiguïté du territoire Trans-Caspien et par le fait que les détachements d'opérations militaires étaient pris dans les troupes du Caucase; maintenant que les choses ont sensiblement changé, il est à présumer que la nécessité se fera bientôt sentir de la séparation de la province Trans-Caspienne d'avec l'Administration du Caucase. Lorsque la contrée sera sortie de son isolement pour entrer en liens plus étroits avec le Turkestan, conclut le "Nouveau Temps," il paraîtra probablement plus logique de la réunir à cette dernière circonscription militaire.

No. 47.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 14.)

My Lord, *Tehran, July* 7, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 1st May, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I yesterday asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs when the Persian and Russian Commissioners would meet for the completion of the Akhal frontier demarcation.

His Excellency replied that the Nesseer-ed-Dowleh was ready to proceed at once to the frontier as Persian Commissioner, but that the Russian Delegate had not yet been appointed. M. de Giers had, however, requested the Governor-General of the Caucasus to select an officer for this duty, and it was probable that the Commission would meet at the mouth of the Atrek and begin work as soon as the summer heats in that region had somewhat abated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 48.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received September* 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 13, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that General Tchernaiew left St. Petersburgh yesterday to take up his appointment as Governor-General of Turkestan. It is probable that he will be about twelve days on his journey to his post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 49.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received September* 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, September* 21, 1882.

UNDER present circumstances, I see no advantage in maintaining Consulate at Astrabad. Occasional visit of an English official to Meshed and northern border of Khorassan would be more useful and less costly. When Russo-Persian Boundary Commissioners commence demarcation of Akhal frontier, probably this autumn, favourable opportunity for such visit will arise, and Mr. Stephen could undertake the duty very efficiently. In the event of Astrabad Consulate being abolished, I think it would be advisable to re-establish on former footing the Consulate at Resht.

No. 50.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 26, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Askabad to the "Golos" newspaper states that M. Lessar, who has been recently occupied in surveying the Transcaspian territory between Kizil Arvat and Askabad, and thence to Sarakhs, and even Herat, with a view probably to the extension in that direction of the Kizil-Arvat Railway, was, on the 26th August (7th September), at Merv, where he was received by the Khans with great cordiality. The telegram adds that M. Lessar left Merv on the 3rd (15th) instant for the oasis of Khiva.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 51.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 30, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an article published in yesterday's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" with reference to correspondence stated to have appeared in the "Morning Post," which treats of the advance of Russia towards India. This correspondence I have not had an opportunity of seeing.

The inclosed article denies that England has anything to fear from the establishment of Russian power in Turkestan and the Transcaspian territory. It declares that Russia has no interest in disturbing the British rule in India. It asserts that she is neither an effete country incapable of progress, nor an insatiable ogre desiring to swallow up the world. But she demands that she may be allowed to understand her own interests.

The article declares that Russia has nothing to gain by withdrawing India from the enlightened rule of England; but it claims that whilst England is endeavouring to find some new source of commerce in every part of the world, it is but equitable to allow that it is both the right and the duty of Russia to do the same.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of September 17 (29), 1882.

LE "Morning Post" poursuit sa campagne traditionnelle contre la Russie et il a à St.-Pétersbourg un correspondant qui sert avec beaucoup de zèle ses sentiments d'hostilité. Ce correspondant lui a adressé toute une série d'articles que l'on peut ranger sous ce titre sonore "Marche de la Russie vers les Indes."

Ce thème n'est assurément pas nouveau. On pouvait même le croire démodé. L'ingénieux correspondant trouve moyen de la rajeunir en utilisant les faits les plus récents. De nouvelles paroles sur un vieil air.

Nous n'analyserons pas ces inventions fantaisistes. Chacun peut se faire une idée des ornements qu'un correspondant exercé est à même de broder sur cette trame usée. Ce sont d'abord les progrès matériels accomplis par la Russie en Asie Centrale. Ils sont incontestables.

Ce sont ensuite ceux qu'elle médite afin de rattacher le tronçon de chemin de fer d'Askabad, par la Caspienne et le Caucase, aux voies ferrées du centre de la Russie, ce qui mettrait cette Puissance à même d'envoyer ses armées à Hérat plus vite que l'Angleterre ne pourrait le faire des Indes, même de Kyber et de Candahar.

Ce sont en outre les desseins cachés de la Russie, c'est l'émulation qui s'est établie entre les autorités militaires du Caucase et celles du Turkestan, à qui aura l'honneur et la gloire d'arriver la première aux Indes et d'y renouveler les exploits d'Alexandre le Grand.—Dans cette course au clocher, le Caucase avait pris la tête par l'expédition de Géok-Tépé. Mais aujourd'hui c'est le tour du Turkestan et la nomination du Général Tcherniaïew n'a pas d'autre signification.

Le danger est donc imminent, il frappe à la porte et ce serait un crime de la part des Ministres Anglais que de ne pas se mettre en mesure de le conjurer. Il n'est pas seulement politique; il est en outre commercial. La Russie n'est pas uniquement éprise de gloire, de conquêtes, de domination politique universelle. Elle a encore un Ministre de Finances ambitieux, qui a la prétention d'étendre les débouchés industriels de son pays à toute l'Asie, à la Perse et jusqu'aux Indes, afin d'en chasser les produits de l'industrie Britannique.

Contre ces périls de tout genre, l'Angleterre est désarmée. Ses forces militaires, maritimes, industrielles, commerciales sont distancées. Le Canal de Suez ne suffit plus pour rétablir l'équilibre rompu par l'ambition Russe. Il n'y a qu'un remède possible pour l'Angleterre, c'est de s'emparer de l'Asie Mineure et de se hâter de construire le chemin de fer de l'Euphrate. Malheur à elle, si elle tarde un instant. Du moins le "Morning Post" n'en aura pas la responsabilité. Il aura honnêtement rempli son devoir de Cassandre.

Nous espérions en avoir fini avec ces fantasmagories depuis les explications amicales échangées entre Lord Clarendon et le Prince Gortchacow, depuis les arrangements qui en ont été la conséquence entre les deux Gouvernements, depuis les pénibles expériences tentées par Lord Beaconsfield et le programme de politique saine, rationnelle et sensée inauguré par Mr. Gladstone. Malheureusement, il y a en Angleterre une école de politiciens et d'hommes d'État qui ont enfourché ce dada de la sécurité des Indes, qui lui doivent leur notoriété, leur influence, leur position et leur carrière, et qui ne sont pas du tout disposés à y renoncer. Malheureusement aussi, l'esprit de parti aidant, ils trouvent dans une sphère élevée et considérable de la société Anglaise un terrain propice pour réveiller des passions passées à l'état de tradition. Et le résultat net de ce travail ne peut être que d'entraver le rapprochement pratique qui tendait à se faire entre les deux Gouvernements et les deux pays par une appréciation calme et rationnelle de leurs mutuels intérêts. Ce rapprochement, au lieu de se consolider, peut être arrêté par la défiance. Les bonnes dispositions mutuelles sont dominées par la crainte de voir un jour ou l'autre le jeu de bascule des partis ramener au pouvoir en Angleterre les idées invétérées dont le "Morning Post" se fait l'organe.

Nous n'entreprendrons pas de les réfuter. On ne combat pas des chimères. Tout ce que nous avons à dire, c'est que le "Morning Post" pourrait avoir une apparence de raison, s'il parvenait à démontrer que la Russie a un intérêt quelconque à troubler la domination Anglaise aux Indies. Les Russophobes tombent dans une singulière contradiction. Tantôt ils représentent la Russie comme un pays pourri, gangrené, voué au désordre, incapable de progrès sérieux; un colosse aux pieds d'argile prêt à succomber sous sa propre masse. Tantôt ils en font un épouvantail, un ogre insatiable prêt à dévorer le monde pour satisfaire ses appétits désordonnés. La Russie ne croit mériter ni cet excès d'honneur, ni cette indignité. Ce qu'elle demande, c'est qu'on veuille bien la croire tout simplement capable, comme toute autre Puissance, de comprendre ses intérêts, et déterminée à les développer et à les défendre comme toute autre nation. Or, en se plaçant sur ce terrain le "Morning Post" devra convenir que la Russie n'a absolument rien à gagner à voir l'Empire des Indes, soustrait à la domination éclairée de l'Angleterre, pour retomber dans la barbarie Hindo-Musulmane, et dans le désordre anarchique qui s'ensuivrait inévitablement. Ce serait évidemment anéantir non seulement l'œuvre civilisatrice de l'Angleterre en Asie, mais compromettre dans son germe celle qui échoit à la Russie dans la partie septentrionale de ce vaste continent. Et pour arriver à ce résultat directement contraire à ses propres intérêts, le Gouvernement Russe devrait s'exposer aux risques et aux

sacrifices d'une lutte colossale sur toutes les terres et les mers du globe contre une des plus grandes Puissances du monde! Nous sommes convaincus que le "Morning Post" lui-même, s'il était un journal Russe, trouverait une pareille politique absolument insensée.

Mais si ces vérités de simple bon sens sont méconnues par cette feuille, il est clair que c'est, non pas intelligence, mais parti pris. Ce serait peine perdue que de vouloir l'éclairer.

Ses jérémiades commerciales ne sont pas mieux fondées. Nous reconnaissons que l'Angleterre plus que tout autre pays, en raison de sa position insulaire, de son territoire restreint, de sa population croissante et de son développement industriel forcé, doit veiller avec sollicitude et énergie à ses débouchés commerciaux. Jadis on faisait des guerres pour fonder la prépondérance du commerce de son pays sur la ruine de celui des autres. Aujourd'hui l'économie politique a démontré que le calcul était faux et qu'on gagne plus à trafiquer avec des pays riches qu'avec des pays pauvres. La lutte est devenue concurrence et émulation; c'est en multipliant les échanges qui abaissent le prix des matières premières, en perfectionnant la main-d'œuvre pour réduire le prix des produits et en améliorant les communications pour diminuer les frais des transports, que les États cherchent à rivaliser entre eux. Sur ce terrain l'Angleterre a déjà un immense avantage par la perfection de son outillage industriel, par la facilité des transports maritimes, par son énorme flotte commerciale, le Canal de Suez qui abrège la route des Indes, et les chemins de fer Indiens qui mettent les portes de son Empire en communication rapide avec le centre de l'Asie. La sphère de son développement commercial est donc naturellement marquée par la distance où les frais de transport changent trop la marchandise pour qu'elle puisse concourir. Si les avantages qu'elle s'est acquis sous ce rapport ne lui suffisent pas, rien ne l'empêche de travailler à les augmenter, soit en améliorant ses produits, soit en diminuant le prix, soit en abrégeant encore les distances par la construction du chemin de fer de l'Euphrate. Mais la plus simple équité exige qu'elle reconnaisse à la Russie non seulement le droit, mais encore le devoir d'en faire autant de son côté.

Il est pénible d'avoir à répéter des vérités aussi élémentaires. Elles ne convaincront pas le "Morning Post." Aussi ne nous reste-t-il qu'à en appeler au bon sens pratique du public Anglais pour faire justice de ces haineuses insanités.

No. 52.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 9, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 9, 1882, 9·25 A.M.

I LEARN that two Russians, escorted by twenty Cossacks and a few Akhal Turkomans, left Sarakhs on the 1st instant for the Sarik Settlements.

No. 53.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 11, 1882.

AS I have already informed you by telegraph, Her Majesty's Government have determined to discontinue the British Consulate at Asterabad.

It will therefore not be necessary to extend the term just expired of Colonel Lovett's employment under this Department, and I have requested you to inform that officer, and to convey to him an expression of my thanks for the services rendered by him during the period of his holding the appointment.

I have been in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India with regard to the suggestion contained in your telegram of the 21st ultimo, that when the Russo-Persian Boundary Commission commences the demarcation of the frontier, Mr. Stephen should take that opportunity of visiting Meshed and the northern border of Khorassan. The valuable Reports of Mr. Stephen are evidence of his competence for such a duty, and Her Majesty's Government authorize you to employ him on such service.

Your proposal that the Consulate at Resht should be re-established on its former

footing is approved, and I shall communicate further with you on the subject of the arrangements to be made with regard to it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 54.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 17, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a translation by Mr. Michell from the "Golos," being a communication from that newspaper's correspondent, relating to a supposed intention of a Turkoman tribe, said to number about 50,000 kibitkas, and to be encamped beyond Merv, near the Afghan frontier, to offer their submission to the Russian authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 54.

Extract from the "Golos."

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" correspondent at Kazalinsk, on the Syr-Daria, writing from that place under date of the 12th (24th) September, sends the following information:—

"A Turkoman of the Téké tribe, Ibrahim Saidusoff, who has adopted Russian nationality, recently received from his relatives, or, as he expresses it, his 'tribe or race,' the following letter:—

"'The English, our unclean neighbours, are persuading us to recognize their Khansha as our Khan, in return for which they promise to respect our holy faith, our customs, and our Aksakals (Judges). We, to the number of 50,000 kibitkas, encamped beyond Merv, near the Afghan frontier, have heard from members of our tribe that you are living comfortably at Kazala. We have also heard that the English are deceiving us. They will not allow us to beat the enemies of our faith and take unbelievers into captivity. It is also said that the Russians will deceive us, but it may be that the Russians are better than our neighbours the English, and we therefore authorize you to present a petition to the Russian Ak-Pasha (White Czar), that we, your kindred, wish to subject ourselves to the Russian Ak-Pasha, and we have affixed our seal to a separate sheet of white paper. Act as you may be guided by the Great Allah and his Prophets. Amen.'"

The number of kibitkas, as stated at 50,000 in the opinion of the "Golos" correspondent, is an exaggeration not unusual in Central Asia. A few days ago the Turkoman Saidusoff, having received the letter, handed over to the authorities the "white paper" bearing the seal of the Khans and other Notables. The correspondent adds that the blank sheet of paper will, in all probability, be filled up just as the local authorities will think fit.

No. 55.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 26, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell from the "Golos" of the 1st (13th) and 4th (16th) September of a portion of notes made by the Russian engineer, M. Lessar, of his journey from Askabad to Herat. This would have been forwarded sooner to your Lordship but for the absence of Mr. Michell on leave.

These papers are to be followed by Parts III, IV, and V.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 55.

Extract from the "Golos" of September 1 (13) *and* 4 (16), 1882.

(Translation.)

"FROM ASKABAD TO HERAT:" by P. Lessar, Engineer.

IN the months of November and December of last year I made my first journey through the Atek country and Khorassan. Although only four months passed between that journey and a second made by me in the month of April of the present year, yet much had changed in the region during that interval owing to the circumstance that the relations between the Russians and the Akhal Téké Turkomans and the neighbouring hostile tribes had become clearly defined. The assault of Geuk-Tépé on the 12th (24th) January, 1881, closed the military operations in the Transcaspian region, and put an end to all resistance in the Akhal country. A considerable part of the population that had fled to Merv and the Tedjent during the war, and after the storming of Geuk-Tépé, would not venture to return to their former places of abode, notwithstanding the proclamation of a complete amnesty.

The arrival of Takhma Sirdar* at Askabad produced a great impression on the Tékés. The gracious manner in which he was received at St. Petersburgh and the high reward bestowed on him dissipated the doubts of the most suspicious, and when he proceeded to Merv and described what he had seen of the greatness and glory of Russia, the ardour of those Tékés who still wished to continue the struggle abated considerably. The inhabitants of the Akhal country, convinced by his assurances that all the past was forgotten, that forgiveness was complete, and that the future depended on themselves, determined to return to their former settlements after gathering the crops they had sown in Merv and along the Tedjent. The unwillingness with which strangers are received by the Mervites in their midst in consequence of the growing scarcity of land and water had also considerable influence over the Tékés, and served to strengthen their resolution to return to their old encampments. The migration back of the Tékés to their former dwelling-places commenced in the month of September, and served as a signal for the pacification of the region. The infrequent cases of robbery which had hitherto occurred on the Persian frontier and along the routes in the steppes leading to Khiva and Bokhara then ceased entirely. The Merv Tékés inhabiting the Atek had never, previous to my visit to their country in the preceding month of November, seen a "Ferenghi," or European, and they therefore, although receiving me and my party in a friendly manner, displayed the reserve and timidity of Asiatics coming for the first time in contact with Europeans. Since then they had become acquainted with the Russians, and their visits to Askabad became more and more frequent, at first out of mere curiosity, and then for the purposes of trade. There had arrived before this deputations from Merv and Tejend conveying feelings of friendship to the Russians, and in proof of their amity, the Tékés had liberated the artilleryman Kadaeff, who had been their captive since the expedition against Khiva, and restored the property of which they had despoiled an Akhal Téké caravan in August when it was proceeding to Khiva. In the month of February of the present year a caravan carrying cotton prints, &c., of the Russian merchant Koushin had succeeded in penetrating even into Merv. At that period the country had become so pacified that there was no necessity for an escort for travellers, &c., journeying between Askabad and Sarakhs. The usual servants armed with guns were sufficient as a protection against any casual robbers. The inhabitants of the Attek received Russian visitors with due honours, and frequently appeared at the Russian posts seeking small favours. Of this state of things I took advantage when requiring attendants for travelling along the Heri-Rud and through the Saryk encampment. In the present condition of the country the Russian traveller will not encounter any danger, but still, as a matter of precaution, it is advisable for him to have a sufficient number of attendants, as small bands of robbers may exist among the different tribes.

The Elders of Kaakhka Settlement undertook to supply me with an escort. They bound themselves to provide me with twenty well-mounted Aleili Turkomans, at the rate of 40 roubles per man per month, and the men were to supply themselves with provisions and their horses with provender. Ten of these men were supplied with Berdan rifles from Askabad, and the remainder of the party were armed with their own muzze-loading guns.

* The leader of the Turkomans at Geuk-Tépé; he died at Bami in the month of June of the present year.

In addition to these weapons, each man carried on his person a whole arsenal, consisting of two or three old pistols, a sabre, and knife.

The Atek.

On the evening of the 16th (28th) April, 1882, I left Askabad, and reached Sarakhs on the 21st April (3rd May), having halted a day at Kaakhka for organizing my escort, which, notwithstanding the promises of the Elders, had not been fully equipped by the time of my arrival.

In order to spare the horses as much as possible, I allowed my Aleili followers to proceed by night to Sarakhs, and generally studied their convenience. The horse I rode was a strong animal, though of the ordinary Kabarda breed, and I always proceeded at a trot. This pace is unknown to the Téké horses, so that they are either ridden at a gallop or foot's pace. The road was perfectly safe, whereas last year the local inhabitants, when proceeding from settlement to settlement, always selected mountain-paths, and travelled in armed parties. When I traversed this country I frequently met single unarmed travellers, mounted on mules, and even on foot.

The whole road from Askabad to Sarakhs is 280 versts (186⅔ miles) and trends at some distance from the mountains, parallel with them, and along perfectly level ground. It is only at Annaù and near Gavars, in two places, that small sand hillocks occur.

To the information I have already supplied in a former paper respecting the Attèk country, I now add some additional data obtained by me during the present year.

The word "Atek," *i.e.*, mountain base, was formerly applied to the whole country from Kazandjik to Sarakhs. This designation, however, was but little used. The part of the oasis, as far as Gavars, occupied by the Tékés, was called the Akhal. The zone of country farther to the south-east is known in neighbouring territories as the Arakadj. The word "Atek" is not known either to the inhabitants of Afghanistan or of Persia. The necessity of separate appellations, both to conquered and independent parts of the oasis, gave to the word "Atek" a right of citizenship; and, at the same time, a definite signification was attached to it. It is now thus applied to the base of the mountains from the Russian eastern frontier to Sarakhs.

Giaurs is the last populated point of the Akhal Téké oasis. Baba-Durmaz, which is situated on the border of Russian territory, 71 versts (47⅓ miles) from Askabad, remains unoccupied. Only two points in the Attek, Luftabad and Shilgan, are inhabited by Shiite Persians, subjects of the Shah. All the other points are occupied by Turkomans, viz., Kaakhka, and partly Küren, of the Aleili tribe; the remaining settlements are inhabited by the Tékés of Merv. All this population is of very recent origin. In the middle of the last century a portion of the Akhal, as far as Durana, was occupied by the Emraly and Karadashly tribes; and the country beyond this, to the south-east, near Yangi-kala, Hurman, and the neighbourhood of Geuk-Tépé and Askabad, formed the camping-grounds of the Alieli tribe. The Téké Turkomans had at that time migrated from Mangyshlak to Kizil-Arvat, and commenced persecuting and despoiling the inhabitants of the Akhal country. These relations between the two tribes continued for about 150 years, when the Tékés gained the supremacy. Early in the present century the Kardashy tribe retreated to Khiva; the Emraly to Mehneh and Chacha; the Aleili partly to Persia and Chinarat and partly to Kiazir (near Nukhur), and the remainder to Küren and Abiverd.

Fifty-four years ago, Allah Kuli Khan, of Khiva, having defeated the Turkomans, drove away the Goklans, Aleilis, and Emralis to Khiva, while from the Tékés he took hostages and tribute. After the death of Tadelie Khan, killed at Sarakhs in 1855, both the Goklans and Aleilis returned from Khiva to their old camping-grounds, but the persecutions of the Persians compelled the Aleili tribe to withdraw once more to Khiva, and it was only in 1873, after the Khiva campaign, that they finally settled in the Atek and built the new Kaakhka fort. The migration of the Tékés to the Atek took place during the last few years.

Suffering from impoverishment of the soil and scarcity of water, the Merv Tékés are abandoning their oasis and gradually settling along the streams that issue from the Daman-i-ku range, where they find a virgin soil and sufficient water, both of which conditions combined insure them abundant harvests. The only disadvantage under which they now suffer arises from their proximity to the Persian Rulers of Ilkhani, Dereghez, and Kelat, who, since the conquest of the Akhal by the Russians, have summoned up courage, and take every opportunity for oppressing their former oppressors the Tékés.

The inhabitants of the Atek live both in mud huts and in tents, although of the latter there are fewer than of the former. Tents are not to be found at all in the settlements between Luterabad and Kaakhka; and at Dushak, Mehneh, and Chacha their number is decreasing with the pacification of the country. It is only the most timid Tékés who leave their families in Merv and come to the Atek for sowing their crops and reaping their harvests. The bulk of the population has settled for good in the Atek. Formerly each settlement consisted of a fort, or "kale," within the walls of which stood the mud huts of the inhabitants; tents were pitched outside the fort, and there, in case of danger, were removed into the kale. At present, at Chacha, all the new buildings are of clay, and they are erected beyond the walls of the fort.

As regards the distribution and abundance of water, this most important question in all Central Asiatic countries, the Atek is under the same conditions as the Akhal —*i.e.*, the quantity of water is very limited, and the streams are situated at great distances from each other. There is this additional disadvantage in the Atek, that the sources of the streams and a considerable portion of their course are situated in the mountains belonging to the Persians, who are consequently able to inflict injury on the Tékés by cutting off the water necessary for the cultivation of their fields. This frequently happens, and great loss of time, &c., is entailed thereby on the Tékés in inducing the Ruler of Ilkhani to order a proper distribution of the water. If this question be not soon settled satisfactorily, it is probable that the Tékés will be obliged to remove from their present settlements, and the Atek will then become a waste.

The following is the distribution of water and populated places from Askabad:—

Annaù, 13 versts (8⅔ miles) from Askabad, 200 tents, is supplied with water by the River Keltechinar, which flows from the Zyry-Ku range. Annaù belongs to Russia, and Askabad is at a short distance, consequently no questions arise as to water.

Gavars, 20 versts (13⅓ miles) from Annaù, 40 tents, and Baba-Durmaz, 38 versts (25½ miles) from Gavars, no inhabitants. These places have two separate streams, which also flow from the Zyry-Ku range; their course throughout is along Russian territory. At Gavars the water is sweet and in sufficient quantity. At Baba-Durmaz, though slightly salt, it is quite good for drinking purposes.

Artyk, 16 versts (10⅔ miles) from Baba-Durmaz, 20 tents, is supplied with water by the Durunger River, which waters the whole fertile Dereghez valley. Beyond Artyk the Durunger terminates in small sheets of water, into which it expands.

Lutfabad and Kuren, 5 versts (3⅓ miles) from Artyk, and all the succeeding settlements, which frequently occur here as far as Kaakhka, are supplied with water by branches of the Rud-Khan, or Rudbar River, which takes its rise in the Allah Akber Mountains. This is the finest river in the whole Attek. There is water here in abundance, and the whole country from Luterabad to Kaakhka is an oasis. About 500 tents are distributed on both sides of the road at twelve points. All the settlements are surrounded by gardens, and the fields under cultivation are of greater extent than elsewhere.

Kaakhka, 28 versts (18⅔ miles) from Lutfabad, 650 tents, is the largest settlement in the Atek. It is supplied with water by the Lain and Archingan Rivers, which, after issuing out of the mountains at Kelat and supplying some Persian settlements with water, unite into one stream in the plain at Kaakhka. During the existence of Abiverd the greater part of the waters of the Rud-Khan and Lain Rivers served for the supply of that town. The Archingan River then reached Karakhan Fort. In the gorge above the ruins of Hodjamed, 17 versts (11⅓ miles) from Kaakhka, at Nourek Settlement (about twenty tents), the Tékés are employed in husbandry. The stream which supplies them with water reaches the road only in spring.

Dushak or Chardeh, 21 versts (14 miles) from Hodjamed, 160 tents. It is situated on the Chardeh River, which runs through the whole of Kelat, and supplies it with water. The inhabitants of Dushak are here least dependent on the Persians; they cannot increase their area of cultivation in the narrow pass, and the water cannot be cut off.

Mehneh, 44 versts (29⅓ miles) from Dushak, 130 tents, and Chacha, 16 versts (10⅔ miles) 70 huts, are supplied with water by two parallel streams issuing out of the Kelat Mountains. Both settlements suffer much from Persian oppression.

For a distance of 55 versts (36⅔ miles) to Sarakhs there is no water; midway near Rabat Abdullah Khan ruins there existed at one time a cistern or reservoir for rain-

water; during the domination of the Tékés Rabat was destroyed, and the cistern was neglected; the earth in it now is level with its edges.

In this manner, along the whole extent of country from Baba-Durmaz to Sarakhs (exclusive of Lutfabad and Shilgan, which is inhabited by Persians), there is a population of about 7,000 Aleili Turkomans and Tékés (about 1,400 tents, reckoning on an average five men to each tent). These figures change from day to day; it is only at Küren and Kaakhka that there is a settled population, and at other points, with the pacification of the country, the population increases. No great increase of the inhabitants can be expected, as the Atek cannot supply means of existence for a dense population, although the soil throughout is fertile; but the quantity of available water being limited, further migration of the Merv and Tejend Tékés to the Atek will soon discontinue.

All the inhabitants of the Atek are engaged in agriculture and the cultivation of vegetables. The crops consist of wheat, barley, and clover; it is only at Chachi that cotton is grown. Melons and water-melons, the staple of food of the Tékés in the summer, are grown in abundance in the gardens. Fruit trees and orchards generally are met with only between Lutfabad and Kaakhka. There are no trees between the latter place and Sarakhs. Great poverty prevails. The Tékés who leave Merv are generally of an indigent class, and during the first year the emigrants suffered great hardships.

There is no trade in the Atek. The requirements of the Tékés are few, and even these they can scarcely satisfy owing to their poverty. The bazaars of Lutfabad and Kaakhka are more than sufficient for satisfying the wants of the whole of the Atek.

II.—*The Roads from Sarakhs and Merv to Herat.*

As after leaving Sarakhs there were five or six stages to be passed through an uninhabited country, I remained a day at the above place for the purpose of obtaining supplies of provisions, &c. Not a few changes had taken place there since my visit in the previous autumn. The Merv Tékés no longer ventured to make plundering expeditions in Russian territory, and had also ceased to do so in the direction of Khorassan. Complete tranquillity prevailed. Persians travelled without escort along the Muzderan road to Meshed in parties of two or three men. Even the aged Commandant of Sarakhs, Colonel Abas Rey Khan, who formerly did not dare to show himself beyond the walls of his fortress without fifty armed followers, now rode about in every direction with ten attendants. He met me as an old friend, and it was with difficulty that I could prevail on him to allow my Aleilis to purchase their own provisions and provender. He wished to supply us with everything free of cost.

During my stay I and all my men were treated as his guests, and he insisted on supplying provender for my horses out of his own stores without payment.

While my men were employed in making the necessary preparations for our advance, I devoted my leisure to making inquiries as to the country through which I intended to travel. Although my guide, Ana Geldy Sirdar, was well acquainted with all the roads, as he had taken part in many plundering raids in Northern Afghanistan and Khorassan, and although several of my Aleili Tékés had journeyed along the course of the Heri-Rud, I did not place entire confidence in them. They were very averse to travelling in the country between the Heri-rud and Murgab. With great mendacity they endeavoured to assure me that there was no ferry across the Heri-Rud at Sarakhs, and that even a ford did not exist at that point, declaring likewise that there were no roads beyond; on the other hand, they unanimously praised the road leading along the Western Persian bank, which had great attractions for them on account of its safety.

Those who are acquainted with the artifices of the Tékés cannot be misled by them, for these sons of the desert are not masters of the art of lying. The information obtained by me from other sources led me to conclude that the best road from Sarakhs, southwards, runs between the Murgab and Heri-Rud, and not through Persian territory. I had already previously ascertained the fact of the existence of a ford at Sarakhs from some traders who had travelled from Merv to Askabad, and therefore on the morning of the 23rd April (5th May), on leaving Sarakhs, I ordered the guide given me by the Persian Colonel for showing us the ford to lead us across to the eastern bank of the Heri-Rud. The country in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs becomes more enlivened. Along both banks of the Heri-Rud and around the fortification settlements are distributed of Merv Tékés, who obtain the sanction of the Persian Government to occupy lands and to irrigate them with water, which they are allowed to divert from

the Heri-Rud; in return for this privilege they pay the Commandant of Sarakhs a tax of one-tenth of the produce of their fields.

Already at Dowletabad the river divides into several branches and overflows its banks to a considerable extent at many points, in consequence of which in the dry season, during the month of August, and even of July, the Heri-Rud does not reach Sarakhs. Sixteen versts (10⅔ miles) above the latter place there are dams which divert the water into deep canals ("aryks"), by which the water is not only brought to Sarakhs, but even 10 or 12 versts farther northward. Three main canals lead from the dam; one runs on the Persian bank, and the two others extend along the eastern bank; all three run almost parallel with the river. The canal on the western bank is maintained for the purpose of supplying Sarakhs and Kale No with water. The other two canals were neglected, and it was only during the present year that they were repaired, and brought into efficient condition by the Merv Tékés, who have settled near it and at Old Sarakhs. These canals existed before the erection of the Sarakhs fort, and when Sarakhs was inhabited by Merv Turkomans. These canals now run as far as Old Sarakhs; formerly they extended still farther to the north-east, namely, as far as Askabad.

Before the capture of Geuk-Tépé the Persians did not dare to lay claim to lands on the eastern bank of the Heri-Rud, and even on the western bank there were no settlements beyond a distance of 50 versts from Meshed. Circumstances have now changed, and the Persians are playing the part of masters in the neighbourhood of Old Sarakhs, the Salyr Turkomans who formerly possessed the lands in this locality not being able now to maintain their rights to these lands. The country about here is the best adapted for agriculture along the whole course of the Heri-Rud, as far as Khosan, out of which the river flows between low banks, which extend, however, only to Pesh Rabat. Beyond this the Heri-Rud enters a gorge of high mountains. There are but few valleys capable of being irrigated, and the valleys that exist are of no great extent; it is only at Pul-i-Khatun, on the Persian bank, and at Kassan-Kala, on the eastern, that large settlements may be established. From Khosan to Pul-i-Khatun the Heri-Rud flows for the greater part in one stream, from 15 to 20 fathoms broad. The water in the river is high from the commencement of January to the end of March. At this time the river cannot be forded without great danger, owing to the rapidity of the current. In the month of April the river can be crossed at many points where the depth of water does not exceed 4 feet. During the summer the water in the river diminishes considerably, and in June and July the river may be crossed at all points, excepting at those places where the steepness of the banks would prevent such crossing.

The slopes of the mountains are overgrown with pistachio trees throughout the whole valley; mulberry trees are also occasionally met with. The edges of the river are overgrown with willow bushes and reeds, and in some places so thickly that they cannot be penetrated.

Grass for horses is found in abundance everywhere and of good quality. The water of the Heri-Rud, although not clear, is of good taste.

It is said at Sarakhs that in former years there was more water in the Heri-Rud; there are, however, no grounds for accepting this assertion as a fact. In 1832 Burnes found the bed of the river quite dry, and of such insignificant proportions was the bed that he took it for the course of some small affluent of the Tejend.

The further course of the Heri-Rud northward and to the north-westward from Sarakhs is known under the name of the Tejend; there is no current in this part of the river, except at high water; then the river is very deep, and in many places it cannot be crossed. O'Donovan swam across the river in February at a place north of Kangaly-Guzar. Lieutenant Alikanoff and Sokoloff, a Cossack officer who accompanied the Russian merchant Koushin to Merv, crossed the Tejend at Karybent dam; in the middle of February the Tejend had here a breadth of 12 fathoms, and a depth of 5½ feet. Frequently the depth of the water here is greater, and then during a month or a month and a-half caravans can only cross the river at Alaman-Djungal, to which point the Tedjent does not reach, the waters of it being conducted to the former place by canals. The river leaves its banks and inundates the surrounding country only when the dam across the river above Herat is destroyed; this dam serves for irrigating the Afghan portion of the Heri-Rud valley.

In summer there is no current in the Tedjent; in places it becomes quite dry, and it may be said to consist mostly of long lakes, fed, in the opinion of the natives, by springs, and perhaps by a subterranean prolongation of the Chacha, Mehneh, and Dushak streams, which disappear in morasses situated 15 or 20 versts (10 or 13½ miles)

from the Tejend. This opinion is founded on the fact that the water in these lakes is cold, and that it does not dry up in the hottest summer, which would hardly be the case if these lakes consisted of an accumulation of spring water in the deep holes of the bed of the Tejend.

The settlements of the Tékés who roam along the Tejend are concentrated to the northward of Karybent and in the direction of Alaman-Djungal. The remaining names which appear on maps designate ferries; there are no inhabitants in their vicinity.

The country between the Murgab and Heri-Rud had, up to the present time, been completely unknown. Along the Murgab and south of Merv the following Saryk settlements occur:—Yulatan, Penjdeh, and Bala-Murgab. Beyond this, southward, the Djemshidis and Teimuris occupy the slopes of the Perepamisus. West of the Murgab, and as far as the Heri-Rud, there is not a single inhabited point. All the forts along the Kulik are in ruins and abandoned by the inhabitants. The road from Merv to Herat, which runs along this river, was described by Shakespeare and Abbott, who travelled by it in 1840 and 1841. No information existed respecting the country between the Kulik and Heri-Rud; no European traveller had ever visited it, and among the neighbouring inhabitants it was only known to the Sirdars, or leaders of robber bands. The Saryks of Yulatan refrained from waging open warfare with their near neighbours of Merv, but the Saryks of Penjdeh and the Murgab constantly despoiled the Mervis. These, in their turn, retaliated in the same way. The relations of both tribes to the Djemshidis and Teimuris did not differ from those existing between themselves.

The principal and constant occupation of both Mervis and Saryks consisted in pillaging the settlements of Northern Afghanistan and Khosan. Wherever the point selected for attack may have been situated, the routes pursued by the robber bands always ran through the country above described, and no one dared to settle in it; and the forts that formerly existed along the Kulik and Heri-Rud were adandoned, as was also the maintenance of the roads. Neither caravans nor travellers ever risked venturing into this part of the country, for fear of encountering Saryk or Merv raiders on their way to Persia or Afghanistan. Now cases of robbery by Merv Tékés are of solitary occurrence, and the Saryks are the only Turkomans who continue to pilage openly. My Aleili followers were very much afraid of meeting some large party of Saryk marauders, particularly as a feud existed between them and that tribe; and the Aleilis were also at enmity with the Mervis. Ana-Geldy Sirdar, the guide from Merv, had, on separate occasions, received three sabre-cuts from the Saryks, and acknowledged that he had deserved them. All candidly confessed that their chance of safety lay in the present immunity of Russians from all attacks, the natives fearing to do them any harm.

We had no opportunity of judging the nature of the treatment that the Saryks would have extended to us, as we met none of their bands. Our encounters with Mervis and Afghans fully confirmed the opinions of the Aleilis. The first incident occurred at about 15 versts (10 miles) from Sarakhs, and, owing to a misunderstanding, nearly terminated in a fusilade. At a moment when I had ridden away from the road a party of men, who proved to be Mervis from the neighbourhood of Sarakhs, appeared in view; they were harmless workmen, on their way to repair a canal. My Aleilis lost their heads, and galloped in all directions in search of me; the Mervis, on the other hand, took us for a party of Saryks, and prepared for defence. Explanations, however, were soon after exchanged, and no affray ensued. . . . . .

The road from Sarakhs to Khosan, 218 versts (145⅓ miles) was traversed in five stages.

From Sarakhs the road first runs in a south-easterly direction; at a point 1 verst (⅔ mile) distant from Old Sarakhs it turns due south. After proceeding half a verst beyond the old Persian fort we crossed the Heri-Rud at the ford, which is a very easy one. The river flows here in four branches, and only in one of them was the water up to the horses' girths; in the others the water was much shallower. The banks are sloping, and the soil is of compact gravel. There are no holes, roots, or stones in the river. The water in the river had already somewhat subsided at the time of our crossing. It sometimes happens that the river cannot be forded at Sarakhs, though this lasts only a few days.

By permission of the Persian Government the Merv Tékés are building a fort opposite to the ford; this fort will be called Popysh Peluan-Kala, after the name of their Elder. For 3 versts beyond the fort the road runs across the aryks and fields of the new settlers.

To the Dookala ruins the road runs along the large canals which commence at Dowletabad, and which have been previously mentioned here. The country all the way is completely level: the soil is a sandy clay; the sandy wastes shown in maps do not exist in reality.

Dookala, 14 versts (9⅓ miles) from Sarakhs, consists of the ruins of a small fort. Here the road leaves the canal on the right, and trending for about 5 versts (3⅓ miles) as far as Kassan-Kala, along a plain, then extends beyond, through a hillocky country, to the Persian fort of Noruz-Abad, on the western bank of the river. Along this extent the Heri-Rud flows close to precipitous, though not high, eastern bank.* Here the road runs along the slight elevations at the back, which have easy ascents and descents. The soil is of clay, and wheeled vehicles could proceed without any difficulty. Opposite the Persian fort of Noruz-Abad the road again descends to the river, and at 4 versts (2⅔ miles) beyond passes the Téké ruins of Noruz-Abad, 21½ versts (14⅓ miles) from Dookala. Both these points have been abandoned by the inhabitants owing to frequent attacks of the Tékés and Saryks.

For nearly 10 versts (6⅔ miles) farther, nearly as far as Shir-Tépé mound, the road continues to run along the Heri-Rud, and then deflects to the south-east, leaving the river to the right; it does not again approach the river until reaching Khosan.

From the turning point to Rabat ruins, at the entrance to the gorge of the pass through the Babak Mountains, about 50 versts (33⅓ miles) from Khosan, the general character of the road is almost the same; it partly runs through level country and partly across hillocky ground; the elevation of the hillocks is inconsiderable; with few exceptions the soil is of sandy clay. Steep ascents and descents are rare. Wheeled traffic would change the direction of the road in some places, and in others it would be necessary to clear it; the labour, however, would be small, as the soil is throughout soft. Along the whole of this extent good food for horses is to be found in many places. Pistachio-nut trees, standing separately, are to be seen pretty frequently growing on the slopes of the hills.

At a distance of 29 versts (19⅓ miles) from Noruz-Abad the road runs for half a verst along a neglected "kariz."* In some of the wells water may still be found. According to my guides the bitter taste of the water is partly to be attributed to the circumstance that the wells have not been cleansed and cleared for a long time, in consequence of which the water has become stagnant; even when the "kariz" was in good repair the water is said to have been not quite sweet; it was, however, fit for use. The presence of salts in the geological formation of the surrounding mountains is also proved by the presence of two considerable salt marshes at a small distance from the road and at the foot of the hills which extend along the Heri-Rud; the surface of these salines is covered with a crust of bitterish salt, evidently washed down by rain out of the surrounding mountains.

Adam-Eolan wells, 41 versts (27⅓ miles) from Noruz-Abad, are two in number, and lie in an elliptical hollow, between some mounds. When we visited these wells the water was quite sweet, notwithstanding that the wells had not been cleaned out for a long time. The Mervis, however, said that during very hot weather the water has a slightly saline taste. It must be supposed that the taste of the water must be bitter, and not salt, in consequence of the stagnancy of the water. The depth of the wells is about 1½ fathoms to the surface of the water, and 2 fathoms to the bottom of the well. The guides stated that the wells are never dry. Formerly the wells were more numerous; at present all, with the exception of two, are filled up. There is excellent fodder for horses all round.

Agar-Cheshmé, 12½ versts (8⅓ miles) from Adam-Eolan, spring, with excellent fresh water; at a distance of half-a-verst up the valley there is another spring which is at present choked up. In all the valleys around there is abundant food for horses.

Rabat Kungrueli ruins, 8½ versts (5⅔ miles) from Agar-Cheshmé. The wells here yield, at a depth of 2½ fathoms, plenty of water, which, however, is slightly brackish. If the wells were kept in proper condition, the water would be perfectly good, for Great Rabat, of which ruins only now remain, stood near these wells. From Kungrueli two roads lead to Afghanistan: one by way of Kyzyl-Bulak and Khombow, along which we proceeded, and the other through Ak-Rabat. The information I obtained respecting the last road I shall give in another part of this paper. The road from Kungrueli to Kyzyl-Bulak runs almost entirely over level ground.

* A "kariz" is a row of wells at a small distance from each other, and connected together by an underground passage. They serve for the collection of water, which is conducted to fields for irrigation.

Kyzyl-Bulak, 39½ versts (26⅓ miles) from Kungrueli. An abundant spring of fresh water lies 200 fathoms off the road, in a small ravine leading to the Heri-Rud. The sides of this ravine are of red sandstone, to which the origin of the name of the spring must be attributed. On the 20th verst (13⅓ miles) the road is intersected by the Shur-ab rivulet, which contains such brackish water that not all horses will drink it. The road runs along this stream for about 5 versts (3⅓ miles) to Rabat ruins, on level ground; at the ruins it leads by a defile into the Barkhut Mountains. Here, on the banks of the Shur-ab, is a small spring of sweet water.

The ascent of the pass across the Borkhut presents no difficulties. With very little labour the present road could be made traversable by wheeled vehicles. The mountains are formed of sandstone. The road runs along the defile through which flows the Shur-ab, which is overgrown with reeds. The river takes its rise almost at the summit of the pass, and out of a morass which, in some places, is 200 fathoms wide. The height of the pass is 3,100 feet above the level of the sea, and about 900 feet above the surrounding locality. The descent to Khosan is more sloping and convenient than the ascent, and could even now be traversed by carts. About half-way down the descent is a sweet-water spring called Khombow, 36 versts (24 miles) from Kyzyl-Bulak; and 2 versts beyond, at the termination of a small stream that issues out of a spring, are the ruins of Rabat Abdullah Khan. From Khombow the gentle descent continues for 6 versts (4 miles) more. The road then divides; one leads to Pesh-Rabat, on the western bank of the Heri-Rud, the other to Khosan, both running through level country.

Khosan, 45½ versts (30⅓ miles) from Khombow, is the first Afghan settlement on the banks of the Heri-Rud on the road from Meshed to Afghanistan. The road beyond Khosan to Herat has been described by many travellers, both Russian and English. It runs along the north bank of the Heri-Rud through level country.

Compared with other routes traversed by me, and according to all accounts, the road above described is the best between Sarakhs and Khosan, and consequently between Askabad and Herat. The roads to Herat from the Caspian, viâ Meshed, run through mostly inhabited and well-cultivated country, in which an abundant supply of water is found. The road therefore presents considerable facilities for active traffic. The disadvantages of the road lie in its traversing several mountain ridges. The construction of a good road over these for wheeled vehicles, and more especially the construction of a railway, would be a work of great labour. Still more unfavourable conditions are presented by the roads from Askabad to Herat, through Meshed. In order to reach Khorassan from the Akhal and Atek country it is necessary to traverse the Daman-i-Kari range. The Hermab Pass, leading from Geuk-Tépé to Boojnoord, is considered the most convenient, but even that pass would present great difficulties in the construction of a railway, and the removal of these obstacles would hardly be recouped by the establishment of greater facilities of communication with Khorassan. Should it be necessary to construct a railway as rapidly as possible, there can be no question of any other direction than that of Sarakhs.

The roads from Sarakhs to Herat, along the Persian bank, will be described by me below. That bank yields water in abundance, but the passes which the roads traverse present greater obstacles than those leading through Khombow. The entire length of the latter road, from Askabad to Herat, is 585 versts (390 miles). The construction of a railway over this distance would not involve any engineering works for the first 300 versts (200 miles), and the last section of 135 versts (90 miles); the intermediate part, which would extend over a distance of 150 versts (100 miles), would not present any greater difficulties than those most of our Russian railways which run partly through flat and partly over hilly ground have to contend with.

The pass is one of an easy kind. If a rapid construction of a railway were demanded, sharp bends in the line would be adopted, and the work on this portion of the line would be completed as soon as the other parts of it. This would be impossible if another direction for the railway be selected.

The road through Khombow is the most convenient for wheeled traffic. In addition to it there are several other routes which also run between the Heri-Rud and Murgab from north to south, and which are connected with each other by transverse roads.

I collected information respecting all these roads. As a possible road for wheeled vehicles from Merv to Herat, the most interesting is that which branches off from the road traversed by me at Rabat-Kungrueli ruins. From this point the road runs to Ak-Rabat, a locality abounding in fresh water, which is obtained from wells at a depth of not more than 1 fathom. These wells may be dug almost anywhere,

and water will be obtained. The road then passes through Guïlen and Chilimé-Souz, two streams yielding a plentiful supply of fresh water. The pass over the Barkhut near Chilimé-Souz is said to be of the same character as that at Khomboù. Beyond the pass one road leads to Kussan along a perfectly level country, and another to Shekivan along a line of inconsiderable elevations. The road from Merv to Ak-Rabat first runs along the River Murgab, then along the Kulik River to Djeveneveida.* After this it strikes off in the direction of Ak-Rabat and passes by Islim-Chilimé Spring.

By this route the Perepamisus Mountains are avoided, as is also the pass at the source of the Kulik River, which led to the supposition that the road from Merv to Herat was impracticable for wheeled traffic on a large scale.

The whole distance of the road from Merv to Herat, according to this direction, is about 380 versts (253⅓ miles).

No. 56.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 30, 1·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 30, 1882, 11·15 A.M.

I LEARN that two Russian engineers have lately surveyed the Heri-Rud district from Sarakhs to the Herat frontier. They wished to enter the Herat territory, but were refused permission by the Afghan authorities.

No. 57.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 6.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, September* 26, 1882.

I HEAR on the authority of travellers who lately came from Merv that the Turkomans of that place had agreed to pay tithes and tribute to the Khan of Khiva in token of their allegiance to him. They do not appear by this arrangement to be precluded from making raids on the Persian territory, as a large party left shortly afterwards on a plundering expedition into Khorassan.

No. 58.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 6, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of Part III of M. Lessar's narrative of his journey from Askabad to Herat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Extract from the "Golos" of September 1 (13) *and* 4 (16), 1882.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Narrative of his Journey from Askabad to Herat.

(Continued from No. 55.)

(Translation.)

III.—*Four Days in Afghanistan.*

THE original plan of my journey did not comprehend a visit to Afghanistan. It was fated, however, that I was to penetrate into that country. The direct road to Persia from Khomboù runs past the ruins of Pesh-Rabat; near these there are two or three fords which at the end of April could have been crossed without any difficulty

* This part of the road has been described by Shakespeare and Abbott.

with a good guide; none of my men, however, were capable of leading us across. I was consequently obliged to proceed to Kussan, for the purpose of getting a guide there, and then to return to Persia by the high road that runs from Herat to Meshed.

We reached Khosan at 9 o'clock in the morning. Leaving my Aleili escort behind, I rode on to the fort in company with two interpreters.

There are still many ruins at Khosan, but the results of the pacification of Central Asia are beginning to be visible even there; the ruined buildings are being rebuilt, and land that formerly lay neglected is now being cultivated, even at some distance from the fort. On our approach the guard at the gates displayed no hostility, but regarded us with great astonishment. When we explained to them by what route we had arrived their surprise was still greater, that road being inaccessible to the Afghans even to the present day.

Notice was sent of my arrival to Ata-Mamed Khan, the Commandant of the fort, while I remained talking with the soldiers. One of them came up and greeted me in Russian. He had been sold as a slave by the Tékés to the Khivans; liberated in 1873, he entered the service of some Russians, and subsequently returned to his native country.

In due time the Khan appeared at the gates, and invited me to his abode. After travelling some narrow lanes between fields and gardens, we entered a two-storied house standing in a beautiful garden, in which was a fine reservoir with water. The vegetation is remarkably luxuriant, owing to the abundant supply of water conducted to this place in "aryks" or conduits from the Heri-Rud.

The Khan was very amiable, and offered me food and refreshments. He boastingly told the members of his suite that he had seen many Feringhis, and knew their habits; in proof of this, he ordered the fowl for my repast to be roasted in halves in the European manner, and not cut to pieces, and then cooked, as is done in Afghanistan. After tea had been served some visitors came in, and a discussion ensued between them and the Khan as to the real signification of my visit; the road by which I had travelled gave them additional ground for surmise. Europeans, they said, and especially Russians, were rare visitors in their country, and some expressed a fear that the Ruler of Herat (Kunduz Khan) would be displeased if not apprised of my arrival; others, however, asserted that the Khan might get into trouble by detaining a Russian. After long hesitation and doubt as to the course he ought to pursue with regard to me, he decided on sending a letter to Herat announcing my arrival, and begged me to remain as his visitor for a couple of days, when an answer to his letter would arrive. To this I told the Khan that if it were necessary to obtain permission of the Ruler of Herat for proceeding from Khosan to Kiafir-Kale I should go to Gorian, and there await the requisite permit. Ata-Mamed was glad to pass me on in this manner to his Chief, the Khan of Gorian, and to relieve himself of all responsibility in the matter. The Khan's Assistant ("Naib") and three horsemen were told to escort me to Gorian.

The road from Khosan to Gorian branches off from the road to Herat near the fort, runs along the irrigating canals which lead from the Heri-Rud, and on the 12th verst (9th mile) crosses the bridge at Tirpulé. This bridge, which was built by Yar-Mahmed Khan, is, with its approaches, 40 fathoms, or 120 paces, long. The river at Tirpul flows in a single stream, through a valley of some breadth. On no occasion has the water in the river, even when at its highest level, left its banks at this bridge. The abutments and arches are of brick; the buttresses for protecting the bridge against ice are faced with hard stone; in severe winters the ice is so thick that it easily bears the weight of a horseman. A considerable quantity of ice is brought down the river in spring.

At high-water level the road from Herat to Meshed does not run through Khosan, but through Tirpul, and then proceeds along the bank to Kiafir-Kale. From Tirpul there is a road to Khaf; the mountains must be crossed at the bridge. The Heri-Rud flows close to the mountains on its southern bank, and the road both to Kiafir-Kale and to Gorian runs in the shape of a narrow pathway, and in some places along declivities of considerable steepness. Owing to this, when the water in the river is low, the river is not crossed at the bridge, but forded where the road on the other bank runs along more level ground. At a distance of 10 versts (6⅔ miles) from Tirpul the valley of the Heri-Rud becomes broader; luxuriant meadow-lands stretch along its banks, and afford pasture to numerous herds of horses, of which my Afghans assured me there were more than 40,000 depastured here. Horses form the principal object of exportation from the Province of Herat into Persia; the animals, however, are of small size, and common, or Yabu bred; on the other hand, they are strong and hardy. The inhabitants have other cattle also in considerable quantities.

From Gorian to Herat there is one stage of 45 versts (30 miles). The valley becomes still wider, and remains equally luxuriant. There is a dam on the Heri-Rud, a little below Herat, which serves for the distribution of water by means of irrigating canals throughout the valley, which no doubt is the most fertile in Central Asia south of the Oxus.

At present the produce of the valley consists of asafœtida, saffron, pistachio nuts, fruit of every kind, fine grapes, corn, barley, and clover. Silkworms are also bred in considerable numbers. Trees, and even bushes, are only found in places where the Heri-Rud overflows its banks; the summits of the hills are quite bare; each settlement has fine orchards; for fuel prickly plants, brought from great distances, are used.

Along the road we only met with encampments of herdsmen; all the villages are in ruins and abandoned by their former inhabitants in consequence of Turkoman raids. We were shown villages that had been pillaged in the preceding month of November by Merv Tékés. I was then engaged in making a survey for a railway between Askabad and Sarakhs. The report that 3,000 horsemen had started from Merv for some unknown place produced a panic throughout the Atek country. By various roads the Mervis sped southwards, and pillaged all the settlements between Shebesh and Shekivan. The attack was so rapid that the robbers could not be pursued, and they succeeded in carrying off much cattle and some prisoners. This was the last "alaman," or robber raid of the Merv Tékés. It is only the Saryks* now who occasionally commit depredations; but they venture out for this purpose only in small bands.

I passed two days at Gorian. The Khan of that place did his best to please me. For my part, I continually expressed my dissatisfaction at being detained for a mere formality, and on the alleged ground that it was necessary to obtain permission, not, as in my case, to travel through Afghanistan, but for the purpose of crossing the river near the Afghan fort. I sarcastically asked the Khan how the Afghan traders were treated at Samarcand; whether in the case of each trader a messenger was dispatched to obtain the sanction of the Yarim-Padishah* for his entrance into Russian territory.

Particularly distasteful to the Afghans were the accounts I gave them as to how the Russians travelled in Persia and the Persians in Russia.

The Khan endeavoured to justify the measures adopted with regard to strangers in Afghanistan, on the ground that, the latter being a small country, a single individual could do it harm, whereas, Russia, he said, was a large Empire, and need not be afraid of any one.

On the evening of the second day there arrived from Herat, with many followers, Nizam-ed-Deen Khan, the Assistant and Chief Councillor of Sirdar Kunduz Khan, Ruler of Herat.

Nizam-ed-Deen Khan, better known under the name of Aghund Zadé, is considered at Herat a very clever and cunning man, and was sent to learn from me the real object of my visit. He was the bearer of presents for me of sweetmeats, tea, and sugar. The conversation began in the usual manner, with inquiries as to my health, my family, and whether I was satisfied with everything in Afghanistan. I returned thanks for the hospitality shown me, and expressed regret at having put to inconvenience a person who was so engaged in public affairs as himself. To this Aghund Zadé replied that the guest of so great a country as Russia was an honoured guest, &c.

After the exchange of all these courteous speeches had terminated, the Khan announced that he wished to speak with me in private. Having sent his suite away, he informed me that the Ruler of Herat had sent him to ascertain from me whether I required anything, and whether I had been charged with any special mission to Afghanistan. All would be ready to serve me, he said, for many Afghans visit Samarcand, and are well received there, while Afghans rarely have an opportunity of showing hospitality to Russians. Regretting the waste of all Aghund Zadé's astuteness and cunning, I hastened to reply to him as follows:—

"On leaving Askabad I never contemplated coming to Afghanistan; the necessity of engaging guides for crossing into Persia alone led me to Khosan, and the observance of Afghan formalities farther to Gorian. I should be very happy to be the Khan's guest at Herat, but circumstances do not allow me to enjoy that pleasure; I am obliged to go to Khaf, and I request you to supply me with guides to that place."

Aghund Zadé politely acceded to this request, and promised that two guides should be placed at my disposal next day at dawn.

* Half-Czar, by which name the Governor-General of Turkestan is known throughout Central Asia.

At last, towards dusk, Aghund Zadé took his departure, having given orders that all my wishes should be complied with. The local authorities, enlightened as to the favourable light in which my visit was regarded at Herat, redoubled their attentions towards me. When I left, they obtained a certificate from me to the effect that I was satisfied with the reception I had met with.

IV.—*Gorian—Turbet-i-Haideri—Meshed.*

At dawn on the 30th April (12th May) we left Gorian. The road at first runs through rich pastures, on which we saw feeding large flocks of sheep and herds of horses; the road trends north-west 80 degrees, and therefore rapidly leaves the Heri-Rud. We soon commenced to ascend, in order to cross a low spur of the mountains; in constructing a road for wheeled vehicles this ascent may be easily avoided. The highest point of the pass is 45 fathoms above the surrounding country. In a broad valley lying beyond we passed several Ghianzes and ruined "rabats."

In the cisterns of the Ghianzes water is still to be found; but the buildings, as well as those of the "rabats," have been reduced to ruins by the Mervis and Saryks. Here every step of the road bore traces of the exploits of these miscreants, and the whole valley, as far as Herat, is abandoned by its inhabitants.

The country is generally not well supplied with water. About mid-way a small stream, called the Sharoù, flows out of the northern spurs of the hills; it is only after a fall of rain that there is a current in this river; when we passed it there were only small pools of water in it, and the water was slightly brackish. The "kariz," or wells, which formerly supplied the settlements and "rabats" along this road with water, are silted up and dry. At the distance of 1 verst (two-thirds of a mile) from Sharoù I was shown the Perso-Afghan frontier; on maps this frontier is placed much farther eastward. The Afghans declared, however, that in former times, before the inhabitants had left the region, Sharoù Kala was an Afghan settlement. North of the road along which we proceeded stretches the Bakherz Valley. A stream called the Teibad-Su issues out of the mountains a little beyond Herat; its water is all exhausted in irrigation at Teibad settlement; it is only after heavy rains that the waters of this river, as well as of other rivulets which are otherwise generally dry, gain the Heri-Rud.

To the right and left of the road occur artificial mounds, similar in appearance to those met with in the Atek country. The Afghans explained to me that they were raised by order of Nadir-Shah for the purpose of erecting forts and watch-towers on them.

From Herat the road runs for 6 versts (4 miles) along the small valley of the Seri-Tchesmé rivulet, and then intersects the Derdeneh rivulet, both inconsiderable streams; owing to this, Kerat is supplied with water taken from "kariz" (underground cisterns). Beyond this point the road crosses over to the western side of the Kerat hills, and then descends to Shishoù Spring, near which there is a small meadow with good grass. A few days before our arrival six men, natives of Khaf, who were driving camels to Herat, had been seized by the Saryks. A general panic consequently prevailed.

On seeing my Aleilis, some Persians who were journeying with some laden donkeys abandoned them and fled in dismay to the mountains. It was in vain that our Persian guide ascended some high mounds and endeavoured to reassure the fugitives by voice and gesture. They would not come out of their hiding-places.

From Shishoù the road descends into a valley which slopes transversely in the direction of Khaf; this place becomes visible at a distance of 15 versts (10 miles); two streams running south are crossed before reaching the town. There is scarcely any fuel along the whole road, commencing from Gorian. There is also not much food for horses after leaving the rich meadows of the valley of the Heri-Rud.

Khaf is the head-quarters of Colonel Stuart, the English Agent at Herat.

During the Russian expedition of 1880-81 against the Tékés, disguised as an Armenian, and under the pretext of buying horses, he proceeded to Dereghez, from whence he watched the movements of the Russian troops. He is principally occupied in riding about and surveying the country on the Perso-Afghan frontier. During this spring the Colonel was at Kerat, Kiafir-Kale, and also proceeded as far as Mohsinabad and Pesh-Rabat. After having organized some unsuccessful expeditions to Merv, he betook himself to the south of Persia.

The road from Khaf to Turbet-i-Haideri runs in a north-westerly direction along a broad valley; from its eastern side hills running continuously are visible, while

on the western these hills gradually become inconsiderable hillocks, and frequently no elevations are seen on the horizon. The road here runs on level ground and over a good gravel soil. Bridges span all the ravines, and these bridges can bear the weight of a cart not very heavily laden.

Both English and Russian maps do not show all the villages actually existing on the road to Meshed.

Since the pacification of the country new villages are springing up. The vegetation is everywhere very rich; but no great development of the country can be expected, owing to the limited quantity of water, in the region. . . . . All the water that exists is sucked up by the "kariz," accumulated in them, and then conducted to the neighbouring villages, which present the appearance of green patches of cultivation in the midst of a barren country. No food for cattle is to be met with up to Meshed. Horses are only kept by the Khans. Donkeys are generally employed for travelling from place to place. Camels are rarely seen, and even then they belong to caravans coming from distant places. Fruit trees are to be found in each village. No forests exist in the country. "Rabats," or buildings erected for the accommodation of travellers, are numerous; they generally stand close to the road, and near a spring of water. The scarcity of wood is one of the drawbacks on this road to travellers. Wood for fuel cannot always be purchased; even prickly shrubs, which are here generally used for fuel, are obtained with difficulty.

The road near the small watch-tower at Gikdabady emerges out of the valley, and ascends some inconsiderable elevations. After passing these Turbet-i-Haideri becomes visible. The gardens surrounding the fortification spread over several miles; it took us more than an hour to pass through them. The water is supplied from springs and "kariz." Turbet-i-Haideri is one of the largest towns in this part of Persia. Within the fort there is a bazaar, which consists of a capital brick building, in the shape of the letter T. The principal articles exposed for sale are, as at Meshed, woven fabrics, saddles, bridles, saddle-bags, tea, French sugar, lamps, hardware, glass, and jewellery. There are also shops in which meat, vegetables, grits, barley, &c., are sold.

The mountainous part of the road begins beyond Turbet, and continues to be of this character as far as Meshed. Three passes, exceeding 6,500 feet above the level of the sea, have to be traversed. The road runs frequently over rocky ground, over which even donkeys slip and fall. The ascents and descents are very steep. The road in general presents great difficulties to travellers, and has never been constructed or put in order. Its worst part occurs near Meshed, from Kiafir-Kale almost to Tirok. There is everywhere plenty of water; there is, however, no food for horses, and no timber or fuel. At a distance of 15 versts the gilt cupola over the tomb of Imaam Riza becomes visible.

At Meshed I intended to pass two days in completing my arrangements for continuing my journey. Thanks to the hospitality of M. Nasyrbakoff, our Agent at Meshed, my preparations were greatly facilitated, and my stay in the town was rendered very agreeable. The report of my journey to Gorian had already reached Meshed, though in an exaggerated form. . . . . On the eve of my departure the Vali of the Province of Khorassan, Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh, brother of the Shah, started on a survey of the eastern Persian frontier, and also for the purpose of causing fortifications to be erected at Kowsheed-Kala, Old Sarakhs, and along the line of the Tedjent. In this manner the Persian authorities will gain possession of the fertile eastern bank of the Heri-Rud, and establish their influence over the Merv Tékés. The depredations of the latter having been put an end to by the Russians, the Persians no longer fear their once lawless neighbours, and endeavour to secure their good graces.

A persistent rumour was afloat to the effect that political intercourse between the Persians and Mervans was conducted through the medium of English Agents, one of whom, it was said, was to accompany Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh on his journey. The expedition of the Prince consisted of a force of 1,000 infantry, 1,200 cavalry, 4 guns, with camp-followers and transport-train; his followers numbered 5,000 men.

V.—*Meshed—Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam, Dogoru, Sarakhs.*

We left Meshed on the 9th (21st) May, pursued our journey in the direction of Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam, with a view of reaching the Heri-Rud, and then advancing along the banks of that river to Sarakhs. There are several roads that lead from Meshed to Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam; the English maps show the road that trends nearest

to the mountains, and which used to be frequented at a time when the high road from Meshed to Herat was rendered unsafe by the frequent depredations committed along it by the Saryks and Tékés of Merv. The Russian map shows a road that runs much lower down, but it partly runs across the mountain-slopes and intersects deep ravines. Now that the country has been made safe for travellers this part of the road has been abandoned, and all traffic is carried on along the road that runs direct through a valley from Feriman to Katti-Shemshir, and the ruins of Hairabad and Leuker. By this route the distance is shortened by about 10 versts ($6\frac{3}{4}$ miles); besides, it is more easily traversed.

As compared with the road from Khaf, the road above described is barren and deserted. Traces of Turkoman exploits are still visible here, and the country is only beginning to recover from the evils inflicted on it. The road runs mostly on level ground, and it is only between Husseinabad and Feriman, over an extent of 6 versts, that ravines and hillocks occur; this road would present no difficulties for the construction of a railway. Beyond Feriman the country is perfectly level. There is plenty of water along the whole route, which passes through a populated region, excepting at Husseinabad, Hairabad (in ruins), Ganz-Sefid, and Abassabad, where there are few inhabitants. At Hairabad and Abassabad water was formerly procured from underground cisterns; when these forts were abandoned by their inhabitants, out of fear of the Tékés, the cisterns were destroyed. At Ganz-Sefid, the building of the Ganz is in ruins, but the water cistern is still in existence.

The inhabitants are Persians, except at Leuker, where there are many Salors, who settled here about thirty years ago. Their language consists of a mixture of Turk and Persian dialects.

The family and many of the followers of Eyoub Khan live at Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam.

For the protection of the road and the suppression of robbery two points of observation have been established, one at Budjgun and the other at Mohsinabad; in the former place 400 mounted militia are stationed, and 100 at the latter.

Mohsinabad is situated at a distance of 5 versts ($3\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from the high road; it consists of 300 dwellings, and is abundantly supplied with water from underground cisterns. Mohsinabad-Su, which is marked on maps as an affluent of the Heri-Rud, is known to the natives under the name of Ravas. In reality it is not a stream, but a gully, which becomes filled with water only after heavy rains; it soon becomes dry again. Reference to the maps of this region is very likely to lead the traveller to the false conclusion that the whole basin of the Heri-Rud affords a plentiful supply of water; many rivers and affluents are shown on the map, but in point of fact these are only gullies which serve to drain off the rain-water. There are only two rivers here—the Kara-Su and Jam. The real course of the Jam begins at Hairabad ruins; this river has no affluents. The Teibad-Su does not reach the Heri-Rud, and its waters are all exhausted at Teibad. The whole of this part of the country, as well as the whole of Khorassan, is poorly supplied with water.

From Mohsinabad I proceeded to Kariz. The road is level; the greater part of the villages are in ruins; the "rabat" is dismantled; the inhabitants were only beginning to return. Dogaru-Rabat, on the Afghan frontier, is also in ruins; the water conduit that formerly existed here is destroyed. The fort and "rabat" of Kiafir-Kale are clearly visible from Dogaru. Five men are daily sent to this place from Khosan for guarding the ferry; at night they return to Khosan.

After leaving Dogaru we turned to the north-east, and followed the road in this direction, eventually reaching the Heri-Rud at Pesh-Rabat, built, according to the Khan of Mohsinabad, by the daughter of Timur. An inscription to that effect appears, the Khan told me, on the wall of the fort, which is in a comparatively good state of preservation. At Pesh-Rabat, where the road reaches the Heri-Rud, both banks are overgrown with reeds, bushes, and trees. In many places they cannot be approached, neither on horseback nor on foot, so thick are these reeds, &c.

From Dogaru to Zoorabad there are three roads. One crosses the river which runs into the interior of the country; in this manner it avoids the mountains, and bends round to the Persian frontier at Zoorabad. The drawbacks to this route are the two fords on the river, which occur where the banks are very precipitous, and which are not traversable at all times of the year. The second and shortest route is that which I pursued. It proceeds across the mountains, but can scarcely be called a road; in some places there is not even a pathway or horse-track. The third road, although the longest, is the best; it runs through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam and Leuker to Zoorabad only one pass occurs on this road.

The second of these roads runs from Pesh-Rabat along the banks of the Heri-Rud to Kalsan-Kala; it then proceeds westwards and intersects the Jam 3 versts (2 miles) from the point at which the river falls into the Heri-Rud. From here the road proceeds through undulating country; it runs past the ruins of Kale-i-Melu, where there is a stream of good water, and enters the mountains 8 versts (5½ miles) beyond. Hence the traveller must journey along narrow paths running through defiles and mostly over bare rock, ascending high passes and descending into deep valleys. There is no road, and even pack-animals can advance only with great difficulty; the construction of a road for vehicles would involve immense labour. There is plenty of water; streams run through nearly all the valleys, and there is good pasturage for horses. Trees grow on the slopes of the mountains. Near Ghelebet Spring there is a rather thick forest.

We issued out of the mountains at about 12 versts distance (9 miles) from the Salor settlements, and then passed several lines of abandoned conduits. After this we proceeded along an irrigating canal, by means of which water was conducted to the fields at Zoorabad.

Zoorabad has at present acquired considerable importance, the occupants of about 2,000 Salor kibitkas having, with the permission of the Persian Government, settled here. About the year 1870 they lived at Old Sarakhs. They were attacked at that time by the Merv Tékés, who drove away their cattle, and compelled the greater portion of the tribe to migrate to Merv. Neither land nor water was allotted to them there; they were therefore obliged to take to cattle-grazing or to become herdsmen for the Tékés. At the time of the Russian expedition of 1880-81 there were no less than 4,000 Salor kibitkas in Merv. The remainder of the Salor tribe was distributed as follows:—1,000 kibitkas were encamped among the Saryks along the Murgab, 400 at Tchardjui, and 200 at Maisiné; while at Pul-i-Salar, near Herat, there were about 100 Salor houses.

Acting on the advice of Takhma-Sirdar, the Merv Tékés decided last summer to allow the Salors to depart to their former dwelling-places. Numbering about 2,000 kibitkas, these Salors migrated back to Sarakhs. They found their former lands occupied, and were obliged to settle themselves at Zoorabad, where the Persian authorities gave them land, with the object of establishing a cordon of Saryk posts along the Heri-Rud to resist the raids of the Mervans and Saryks. About 2,000 Salor kibitkas remained behind at Merv. . . .

The chief Salor settlement is situated on a mound near the old Zoorabad fort. Near this place the Persians intend to erect a new fortification.

The Salors received me with great hospitality, and with expressions of devotion and gratitude to Russia. They attribute their liberation from Merv entirely to the conquest of the Akhal country by the Russians and to the advice given by Takhma-Sirdar. All this, however, did not prevent them charging very high prices for everything I procured from them.

Two roads lead from Zoorabad to Pul-i-Khatun. The first, which is the shortest, runs through the mountains; the second crosses over to the eastern side of the river, and again joins the Persian bank by way of Hermaù-Derbent, where it joins the first road.

The mountainous route presents, as far as Deana-Derbent, great difficulties, and is in character similar to the road from Kala-Melu to Zoorabad. Near Deana-Derbent the road descends to the Heri-Rud, and proceeds along its bank to Sarakhs; on the eastern side of the river the mountains continue to run almost as far as Pul-i-Khatun. On the Persian side of the river the mountains recede from it, and the road only in some places runs across their low spurs. From Pul-i-Khatun to Sarakhs the road runs along gently sloping ground.

At Pul-i-Khatun (Woman's Bridge) there used formerly to be a bridge over the Heri-Rud; four arches of it still exist, but the fifth was destroyed by Medhli Khan at the time of his expedition against Merv. The whole length of the bridge is 25 fathoms. The Kara-Su falls into the Heri-Rud near this bridge. Its breadth here is about 6 fathoms, although its depth is inconsiderable (not over a horse's knee). The ford is very inconvenient, owing to the enormous boulders that strew the bed of the river.

After having on the 18th (30th) May overtaken the Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh, with his reconnoitring force, at Noruz-Abad, I soon reached Sarakhs, where great preparations were being made for the reception of the Vali.

Along the whole road to Askabad the inhabitants of the Atek complained of their pitiable condition. The Persians systematically deprive them of water when they

most require it for their crops. The Tékés do not dare to support their rights by force, and find that they must either become Persian subjects, and pay tribute to the boundary officials, or abandon their settlements and retire either to Merv or the Tejend, notwithstanding that such migration would entail on them serious losses and privations.

No. 59.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 7, 1882.*

DURING the Session of the House of Commons on the 2nd instant Mr. Ashmead Bartlett asked a question with regard to the reported advance of a Russian force towards the Afghan frontier and Herat, and Sir Charles Dilke answered that two Russian engineers had attempted to enter Herat territory, but had been refused permission by the Afghan authorities.

This answer was reported to St. Petersburgh by telegraph, and it produced a short article in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 4th instant, copy of which is inclosed, and which states that no news has reached this city of the fact mentioned by Sir Charles Dilke, that it is not known what persons may be alluded to, and that there must be some mistake in the qualification of the persons spoken of by Sir Charles.

I have been unable to ascertain that there is any foundation whatever for the rumour mentioned by Mr. Bartlett of the advance of a Russian force 100 miles south of Merv.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 59.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of October 23 (November 4), 1882.

D'APRÈS une dépêche de Londres Sir Charles Dilke a parlé hier, à la Chambre des Communes, d'après un Rapport du Chargé d'Affaires d'Angleterre à Téhéran, en date du 30 Octobre, de deux ingénieurs Russes qui auraient cherché à pénétrer sur le territoire de Hérat, mais auxquels les autorités de l'Afghanistan auraient refusé l'autorisation à cet effet.

Tout ce que nous pouvons dire à ce sujet, c'est qu'on n'a à St. Pétersbourg aucune connaissance d'un fait de cette nature, qu'on ignore de quelles personnalités il peut s'agir, et qu'il doit y avoir erreur sur la qualification des individus dont Sir Charles Dilké a parlé.

No. 60.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 8, 1882.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Moscow Gazette" of the 25th October (6th November), the "Baku News" states that "it is intended to construct a road between Ghermab and the Rabat Pass into Persia. This road is to start from Geuk-Tépé and terminate in Persia. The first Russian section of it, from Geuk-Tépé to Ghermab, is ready and now used by wheeled vehicles. A sum of 25,000 roubles is asked for by the Government for completing the second section. By the construction of this road a new route for merchandize will be opened to Meshed, which is a very important commercial centre in Central Asia. At present there is only one road to that point, and a very difficult pass occurs on it at Asterabad. Even at present the carriage of goods viâ Askabad is cheaper than by way of Gez. With the establishment of a good road for carts the cost of transport will be still less by the newly-projected road."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 61.

*Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.**

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 15, 1882.

IN your telegram of the 30th ultimo, you stated that two Russian Engineers were reported to have lately surveyed the Heri-Rud district from Sarakhs to the Herat frontier, but that the Afghan authorities had refused them permission to enter the Herat territory.

A statement in the above sense having been made in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the truth of the report has been denied by the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," and I should accordingly be glad to learn whether you are in a position to furnish particulars as to the identity and proceedings of the persons who conducted the survey in question.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 62.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 16, 1882.

ON the 9th October two Russian officers with twenty Cossacks were seen at Turbet Jām, and stated that they were on their way from Zoorabad to Herat. On the 15th October news was received at Herat from Governor of Kuhsan that these officers had arrived on the frontier; after consultation, Herat authorities issued orders that Russians should not enter Afghan territory, but might express wishes in writing to be laid before Ameer, whose reply would be forwarded to them as soon as received.

No. 63.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 25.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 25, 1882.

RUSSO-PERSIAN Boundary Commission will shortly assemble, and I propose to send Mr. Stephen now to Khorassan.

No. 64.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 22, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Turkestan Gazette" of the 12th (24th) October last, General Tchernaieff, when passing through Fort Kazalinsk, *en route* to Tashkent, stated, in a speech addressed to the naval officers stationed at that fort, and attached to the Aral flotilla, that this flotilla would be disestablished. On the 21st September (3rd October), 1882, General Tchernaieff instructed the Senior Naval Officer in command to hand over the steamers and barges of the flotilla to the Senior Engineer, and to discontinue the regular service of the vessels. Four days after the sailors were landed and housed in barracks preparatory to being sent to their respective homes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

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* Substance telegraphed.

No. 65.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 27, 1·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 27, 1882, *noon.*

I HEAR that Makhtum Kuli Khan has gone to Askabad to tender his submission, and that Russian surveying party has visited Tejend, north of Kelat.

I am also informed that party of eight Russians recently visited Merv, and that Agent residing there on the part of Khan of Khiva is dead.

No. 66.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 6, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the official Gazette of the 20th November (2nd December), 1882, contains a full enumeration of the titles of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia.

To the long list of Imperial titles is now added in the above enumeration the designation of "Sovereign of Turkestan" ("Gasudar Turkestanski").

The arms of Turkestan are described as consisting of an unicorn sable passant, on a field or, with eyes, tongue, and horn gules.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 67.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 27, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, December* 27, 1882, 12·40 P.M.

MR. STEPHEN left on the 7th, and will reach Meshed at about the end of month.

No. 68.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 28, 1882.

I HAVE to request you to take an opportunity of informing the Russian Government that Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran is about to dispatch Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to the Legation, on a tour in Khorassan.

I understand that a Commission will shortly assemble for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontier, and it may be desirable that the Russian Government should be in a position to communicate the fact of Mr. Stephen's journey to the Russian Commissioners, whom he is likely to meet in the course of his travels.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 69.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 8.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 4, 1883.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's despatch of the 28th ultimo, I addressed a note to M. Vlangaly, informing him of the intention of Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran to send Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to the Legation, to take a tour in Khorassan.

I have now the honour to inclose copy of M. Vlangaly's answer, in which he states that although it had been agreed in principle to send a Commission for the

demarcation of the Russo-Persian boundary, the time for its meeting had not been decided upon, and might not be near.

His Excellency adds, however, that the military authorities of the Trans-Caspian province would be apprised of Mr. Stephen's presence, so that, if the Russian Commissioners should meet him, they would receive him with the courtesy due to every English traveller recommended by Her Majesty's Representative.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 69.

M. Vlangaly to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 22 *Décembre,* 1882 (3 *Janvier,* 1883).

PAR la note du 21 Décembre, 1882 (2 Janvier, 1883), votre Excellence a porté, d'ordre de Lord Granville, à la connaissance du Ministère Impérial, l'intention du Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran d'envoyer Mr. Alexander Condie Stephen, Second Secrétaire de la Légation, faire une tournée dans le Khorassan.

En outre, votre Excellence ajoute que Lord Granville, ayant appris qu'une Commission doit se réunir prochainement pour la démarcation de la frontière Russo-Persane, pense qu'il serait désirable que le Gouvernement Impérial puisse communiquer le fait du voyage de Mr. Stephen aux Commissaires Russes, qu'il sera probablement dans le cas de rencontrer dans le cours de ses excursions.

En remerciant votre Excellence de cet avis, je dois l'informer que bien que l'envoi d'une Commission de Démarcation sur la frontière Russo-Persane soit convenu en principe, l'époque de sa réunion n'est pas fixée et ne paraît pas devoir être prochaine, vu l'absence des cartes et données techniques locales qui devraient servir de base à ses travaux.

Le Ministère Impérial se réserve néanmoins d'informer nos autorités militaires de la Province Trans-Caspienne de la présence de Mr. Stephen, afin que si les Commissaires Russes venaient à le rencontrer, ils lui fassent l'accueil courtois dû à tout voyageur Anglais recommandé par le Représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) A. VLANGALY.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, December* 22, 1882 (*January* 3, 1883).

IN your note of the 21st December, 1882 (2nd January, 1883), your Excellency has brought to the knowledge of the Imperial Ministry, by command of Earl Granville, the intention of Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran to send Mr. Alexander Condie Stephen, Second Secretary of the Legation, to make a tour in Khorassan.

Your Excellency further adds that Lord Granville having learnt that a Commission is to meet shortly for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontier, thinks it would be desirable that the Imperial Government should communicate the fact of Mr. Stephen's journey to the Russian Commissioners, whom he would probably meet in the course of his travels.

I have to thank your Excellency for this communication, and to inform you that although the dispatch of a Demarcation Commission to the Russo-Persian frontier has been agreed upon in principle, the time of meeting has not been fixed and does not appear to be imminent, considering the absence of maps and technical data which must serve as a basis for its labours.

The Imperial Ministry nevertheless will inform our military authorities in the Transcaspian Province of Mr. Stephen's presence, so that, should the Russian Commissioners meet him, they may accord him the courteous reception due to any English traveller recommended by the Representative of Her Britannic Majesty.

Receive, &c.
(Signed) A. VLANGALY.

No. 70.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 18, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, January* 18, 1883.

TWO Russians having been recently killed by some Merv raiders near Chacha, in Atek of Kelat, Russians have sent an Agent to Merv with peremptory demand for surrender of the murderers. Detachment of Russian cavalry has also visited Chacha, and arrested Chiefs, who have been taken prisoners to Akhal. Body of Russian cavalry and infantry, with two guns, is reported likewise to have entered Atek districts. Persian Minister at St. Petersburgh has been instructed to remonstrate against these acts of interference in the Persian territory. It is further reported that a Russian Colonel, with twenty-five Akhal Turkomans, has lately passed Sarakhs on his way to Penjdeh.

No. 71.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 17, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Novoe Vremya" of the 30th December, 1882 / 11th January, 1883, reporting an attack made upon a Russian officer by some Merv Tékés.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of December 30, 1882. / January 11, 1883.

(Translation.)

THE newspaper "Kavkas" states that about a month ago some Merv Tékés attacked a Russian officer of the Corps of Topographers, who was engaged in surveying, and wounded him. Other accounts state that he was killed. Of the four Cossacks who accompanied him, three were killed. The Russian authorities at Askabad have demanded from the Khan of Merv the surrender of the guilty persons.

No. 72.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 17, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Golos" of the 31st December, 1882 / 12th January, 1883, relating to the management of the railway from Michaeloff Bay, on the eastern shore of the Caspian, to Kizil-Arvat, and to the cost of working the line.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Extract from the "Golos" of December 31, 1882. / January 12, 1883.

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" of the 31st December, 1882 / 12th January, 1883, publishes the following information respecting the Trans-Caspian Railway:—

"The railroad, which is 217 versts in length, extends, as is known, from Michaeloff Bay to Kizil-Arvat, situated in the Akhal Téké steppe. This road will acquire further important military signification by dispensing with the necessity of maintaining a considerable military force for the security of the Akhal Téké oasis, whilst commercially its advantage will consist in attracting to it a considerable traffic of goods which has hitherto passed between Persia and Khiva by longer and less convenient

routes. The cost of working the line is estimated as follows: Cost of maintaining a reserve railway battalion, 217,417 roubles; maintenance of employés, exclusive of the above, and allowances to men of the railway battalion, 203,558 roubles; cost of maintaining the line, 170,869 roubles; making a total of 591,844 roubles. This amount, it is estimated by the War Ministry, will be more than covered as follows: (1) dispensing with the transport on camels of stores for the Akhal Téké detachment, which would cost about 400,000 roubles; (2) obviating the necessity of establishing post stations along the whole distance—a saving of 150,000 roubles; and (3) receipts for passengers and transport of goods belonging to private persons, about 100,000 roubles.

"The Trans-Caspian Railway is under the jurisdiction of the War Ministry and is worked by the above-mentioned railway battalion. The immediate supervision of the line rests with the Chief of the Trans-Caspian region, to whom the staff of the railway is subjected.

"The number of employés engaged on the railway is 782."

No. 73.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 1, 1883.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, December* 11, 1882.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has on several occasions during the past year pressed the Russian Government to appoint their Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan boundary, in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty concluded between Persia and Russia in December last. The Russian Government has, however, avoided compliance with this request, alleging, in the first instance, that the necessary surveys of that portion of the frontier had not been completed; and, in the second place, that the Commissioners could not proceed with their work during the heat of summer. In reply to further urgent representations made at St. Petersburgh and through the Russian Legation here, the Persian Government was lately informed that General Zelenoi had been selected for this duty, and that he would proceed to Asterabad and be ready to commence operations about the beginning of the present month.

The Nasseer-ed-Dowleh, who was appointed Persian Commissioner last winter, having been recently named Minister of Commerce, Suleiman Khan, a former Governor of Asterabad, has been appointed in his stead. When this official was leaving for Asterabad to meet his Russian colleague, M. Argyropoulo, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires informed the Persian Government that he had been instructed to propose that the Commission should not assemble till spring, as the maps were not ready, and the winter season was now too far advanced for commencing work. The Persian Ministers consider it very desirable that the demarcation of the line of frontier should be completed as soon as possible, and they have not therefore agreed to this proposal, but have suggested that the Commission should meet at once, and proceed to examine the question of the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans residing at Hussein Kuli, near the mouth of the Attrek—it having been already agreed that this disputed point should be the first matter to be inquired into and decided on the spot by the Commissioners.

Mr. Stephen left this for Khorassan on the 7th instant, and should reach Meshed in a fortnight from the present time. He will visit Turbet-i-Sheikh Jām and Bākherz, and will then proceed by way of Sarakhs to Kelat and Dereghez to report on the state of affairs at that part of the frontier.

No. 74.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 1, 1883.)

My Lord, *Tehran, December* 26, 1882.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has been informed by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires that it is the intention of his Government to appoint an Agent, under the VIIth Clause of the Russo-Persian Boundary Treaty of the 21st December 1881, to reside at Koochan and act as intermediary between the Persian authorities and those of Akhal.

In reply to this communication, Mirza Saïd Khan has conveyed to the Russian

Government, on the part of the Shah, a request that the appointment in question should not be made at present, His Majesty being of opinion that the presence of a Russian Agent on the Persian frontier is not immediately required, and that before acting upon the clause of the Treaty which sanctions such appointments, the stipulation for the nomination of Commissioners to define the exact line of frontier between Akhal and Khorassan should be carried into effect. If, however, the Russian Government still desires that the appointment should be made at once, the Shah asks that a Mahommedan should be named to the post, and I understand that it has been agreed that this request shall be granted.

Meanwhile, the Shah has ordered the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in view of the likelihood of this appointment being made, to send one of the employés of his Department to reside in Koochan, in order that all communications between the Russian Agent and the Persian authorities may pass through his hands, it being considered that the Governor of the district has not sufficient experience of dealings with foreign officials to undertake that duty himself.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 75.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 1, 1883.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, December* 27, 1882.

WHEN I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23rd instant, I spoke to him on the subject of Mr. Stephen's journey to Khorassan.

Referring to his Excellency's letter of the 10th December, which I had the honour to submit to your Lordship in my despatch of the 22nd instant, and to the statement therein contained—that the Persian Government required to be informed of the object with which foreigners visited Persia or entered Khorassan—I said that I could not recognize any such claims, but that there was nothing in the policy of Her Majesty's Government in this country requiring secrecy, our object and constant endeavour being to strengthen and secure the independence of Persia, and that there was no reason, therefore, why the Persian Government should not be fully informed of the object of Mr. Stephen's journey. It had recently been reported from Khorassan that Russian Agents had visited the Herat frontier and the Saryk Turkoman settlements on the Murghab, and Mr. Stephen was directed to proceed in the direction of the Afghan frontier to make inquiry on that subject. He would afterwards visit the Dereghez frontier districts and report on the situation there, our information respecting recent events on that part of the Khorassan border being at present vague and unsatisfactory.

I added that it appeared from the conversations I had held with his Excellency from time to time relative to affairs in Khorassan that the Persian Government was itself ill-informed as to passing events and the proceedings of frontier officials in that province.

Mr. Stephen's journey, I remarked, might or might not be of service and productive of good results to Persia; it could not be supposed that it would be injurious to her interests; and one certain advantage that would be obtained would be that we should acquire more accurate information on these subjects than was now possessed by Her Majesty's Government or by that of Persia.

No. 76.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 6, 10·45 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 6, 1883.

MERV Chiefs have acceded to Russian demands and have surrendered murderers referred to in my telegram of 18th ultimo.

No. 77.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 10.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 6, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Golos" of the $\frac{\text{30th January}}{\text{6th February}}$ states that the rumour of disturbances at Geuk-Tépé, in the Trans-Caspian region, may probably have originated out of the circumstance that some Merv robbers attacked a Russian officer of the Corps of Military Topographers, named Parféniew, and his escort of Cossacks. During the attack the officer was wounded, and three Cossacks killed.

According to the newspaper "Kavkas," the leader and one member of the band of robbers have been given up to the Russian authorities at Askabad by the Merv Turkomans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 78.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 10.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 7, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a short article published in this morning's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," announcing that the chief and another of the band of brigands who attacked and wounded the Russian topographer, M. Parféniew, and killed three Cossacks in the neighbourhood of Chacha, have been brought to Askabad.

It adds that the two culprits were given up by the Tékés of Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of $\frac{\text{January 26}}{\text{February 7}}$, 1883.

UN télégramme d'Askabad, publié dans le "Caucase," annonce qu'on vient d'amener dans cette ville le chef et l'un des brigands de la bande qui a attaqué aux environs de l'aoul Chacha le topographe Russe, M. Parféniew, et tué trois Cosacques, en blessant M. Parféniew lui-même. Les deux malfaiteurs ont été livrés par les Tékés de Merv.

No. 79.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 16, 1·35 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 16, 1883.

MR. STEPHEN reports having met with 300 Sarik Turkomans on the 6th instant returning from a raid. His escort of 70 Salor Turkomans insisted on pursuing retreating raiders, and were repulsed with some loss. All his own party were uninjured.

No. 80.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 18, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, February* 18, 1883, *noon.*

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs yesterday received a telegram from Askabad reporting that Turkomans had attacked Mr. Stephen's escort near Sarakhs. Stephen himself escaped unhurt, but eleven of his escort were killed and nine wounded.

No. 81.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 19, 3 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February 19, 1883, 4·50 P.M.*

MR. STEPHEN telegraphs from Chacha, the 12th, 14th, and 16th February, that on the road he met a Russian named Knoss, who, in dictatorial language, tried to prevent him entering Ateks. Russian said Stephen must await at Chacha result of reference to Akhal authority. Stephen refused to recognize interference with his movements in Persian territory, and, in view of the friendly relations between the Governments, insisted on courteous treatment. Russian rode out on the 15th instant to prevent fresh escort from arriving from Kelat, stating that he would use force to prevent Stephen proceeding to Kelat before Askabad answer came. Persian officer said that he had orders to come and meet Stephen, and must carry them out. Finally, Russian allowed escort to arrive, but his language was very violent and unreasonable. On the 16th Russian received instructions not to interfere with Stephen's movements, and he is now on his road to Kelat.

No. 82.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 21, 1883.*

I INCLOSE copy of a telegram from the Minister at Tehran, reporting that a Russian official has endeavoured, in a very discourteous manner, to prevent Mr. Stephen from proceeding on his journey to Kelat, pending a reference to Askabad.*

I have to request your Excellency to bring this matter before the Russian Government, and to represent to them the necessity of giving such orders as will in future prevent such unjustifiable interference on the part of a Russian official with the movements of a British subject on Persian territory.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 83.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 5.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February 28, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an extract from the official Gazette of the $\frac{15}{27}$th instant, reporting information given by the Russian engineer, M. Lessar, to the Russian Geographical Society, with regard to the journeys which he has made in different parts of the Trans-Caspian region, including Merv, and in Afghanistan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

THE official Gazette of the $\frac{15}{27}$th February, 1883, contains an account of a meeting of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society held on the $\frac{9\text{th}}{21\text{st}}$ February, and at which a communication received from M. Lessar was read.

In the early part of December, the account states, M. Lessar returned to Askabad, where he intends to pass the winter. Between April and December last year he made several excursions in the open country situated south and east of the newly-conquered Akhal-Téké region, for the purpose of elucidating several questions respecting the Aral-Caspian depression.

* No 81

Up to the present time M. Lessar has been unable to draw up a detailed Report for presentation to the Geographical Society, owing to insufficiency of time to collect and arrange his notes and observations. At the same time, several facts which have come to light relate to questions of such interest that M. Lessar thought it expedient, without waiting for their complete elaboration, to give a brief outline of the results obtained.

The following is a list of the excursions made by M. Lessar:—

1. From Askabad, viâ Sarakhs, across the country between the Heri-rud and the Murgab, in the Herat Valley, to Khosan, and beyond to Gorian; thence, viâ Khaf and Turbet-i-Haideri to Meshed. From Meshed through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam to Kafir-Kale, and then straight to the north viâ Zoorabad to Sarakhs, along the River Heri-rud. The main object in view was to explore the road leading southwards from Askabad.

2. The second excursion was through Deregez, Kelat, and the Pass of Khozar-Mosht (? Hezar Mesdjid) to Meshed; thence to Zoorabad. Excursions were again made by M. Lessar in various directions between the Heri-rud and the Murgab, with the object of exploring that part as much as possible. From here the traveller went to Sarakhs, and taking *en route* Neazgabad and Shentli to Merv; from Merv the Oxus was reached, somewhat north of Chardjui; thence he proceeded along the Oxus to Khiva, Ismukshir Charzshly, and the Fort of Durun, in the Akhal region.

3. In October month M. Lessar and Captain Maslofsky, of the Corps of Topographers, took barometrical levels between Askabad and Tejend. The levels were taken simultaneously by barometrical observations every 6 versts. Our mercury barometer was used.

4. At the invitation of the Khan of the Sitchmas tribe, M. Lessar, in the same month, revisited Merv, and drew up descriptions of the following roads:—(*a*) viâ Dashakh and Karibend to Merv; and (*b*) from Merv, through Tash Rabat, Shentli, Hoozi-Khan, and Kale Kowsheed to Sarakhs.

5. In November and December M. Lessar explored the mountains of Kelat, Deregez, and the Atek, being chiefly interested in the supply of water and the state of irrigation.

Thus, from April to December, M. Lessar travelled over 5,000 versts, and had only just time to make official Reports, &c., in the short intervals between his excursions.

A map of the places explored is being prepared, and will be published in a short time. M. Lessar intends to recommence his explorations in February month, if his health, which has been greatly impaired by his three years' travels in the Turkoman country, will allow him to do so.

St. Petersburgh, February $\frac{16}{28}$, 1883.

No. 84.

Sir L. Mallet to Sir J. Pauncefote.—(*Received March* 5.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, a translation of an account given in a Russian newspaper of Lieutenant Alikhanof's notes on Merv.

India Office, March 5, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Newspaper Extract.

AT a meeting of the Geographical Society at Tiflis, on the $\frac{26\text{th January}}{7\text{th February}}$ last, M. Levashef read some extracts from notes on Merv, written by Lieutenant Alikhanof, who had visited Merv in the disguise of a trader.

The following résumé of the paper is given in the "Kavkaz" of the $\frac{28\text{th January}}{9\text{th February}}$:—

"Lieutenant Alikhanof begins with an historic notice of Merv, passing on to a minute description of the roads leading to the oasis, which is, in military respects, a place of great importance. He then proceeds with the geography and ethnography of the oasis, showing that it covers an area of 4,900 square versts, of which 4,000 are

suitable for agriculture, and 900 are totally unfit for cultivation. The Murghab river, with its system of large and small canals, serves to irrigate a country extending 400 versts. There is also a lake in the oasis, called Ainakhe. There is hardly any rainfall from May to September, and the temperature in the shade varies from 35 to 45 degrees Réaumur. Snow lies on the ground for about twenty days in December and January, when the temperature is not lower than 7 degrees Réaumur: in February it reaches 30 degrees Réaumur. On irrigated lands wheat yields twenty-fold and sorghum one-hundredfold. A small quantity of cotton is grown and some silk fabrics are made. The quantity of water supply is the measure of the well-being of the people; they have not land enough, and are therefore comparatively poor. The population of the oasis does not exceed 32,400 tents,* or not more than forty-eight individuals to the square verst.

"The country is governed by three Khans, who, however, possess only an executive power, all affairs being settled by a Medjliss, or Council, which is assembled by the Khans and Ishans (Mollahs) when occasion requires. There are no regular taxes; these are levied by order of the Medjliss when necessity arises. There are many artizans amongst the people, but chiefly silversmiths. The women are clever at weaving carpets and rude silk fabrics. The Mervis are great gluttons, and they are particularly fond of sweets. Blood feuds, theft, and freebooting are common in Merv, and it would be difficult to eradicate these crimes. Trade and industry are but little developed, and the whole value of the trade of the oasis does not exceed 500,000 roubles (50,000*l.*). European sugar-plums or comfits and cotton prints are most in demand at Merv. Lieutenant Alikhanof believes that when Merv is annexed to Russia the oasis, occupying as it does a central position, is capable of a commercial development, and may become an *entrepôt* of Russian and West European trade with Central Asia."

No. 85.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 3, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 22nd November last, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Cronstadt Gazette" of the $\frac{18\text{th February}}{2\text{nd March}}$ 1883, states that a second Imperial Order has been issued respecting the disestablishment of the Aral flotilla. By virtue of this order the officers of the flotilla, as also those attached to the port of Kazalinsk, and the naval staff of the Turkestan region, will receive other appointments, whilst the men will be incorporated with the troops of the Turkestan region. The material and stores belonging to the flotilla will remain at Kazalinsk until some decision is arrived at respecting their sale.

"With the forward movement of our Central Asian frontier," the Gazette remarks, "the Aral flotilla has gradually lost the military and naval importance which it originally possessed, and has latterly been exclusively employed on transport service. The vessels of the flotilla will probably be made over to some private Company which will undertake the transport of goods and passengers along the river Syr-Daria."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 8.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 5, 1883.

IN compliance with the instruction contained in your Lordship's despatch of the 21st ultimo, I addressed a note to M. de Giers, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, relating to the interference by a Russian official named Knoss with the movements of Mr. Condie Stephen within Persian territory.

I also inclose copy of M. de Giers' answer, which I received yesterday. In this note his Excellency states that he has received no information respecting the circumstances to which I had alluded, and that he can only attribute to a

* Generally calculated at four individuals to one tent.—R. M.

misunderstanding the facts of which Mr. Stephen complains, but that he has already caused inquiries to be made.

The point, however, to which I would particularly call your Lordship's attention in M. de Giers' note is his Excellency's assertion that the Atek cannot be considered as an integral part of Persia. He states that this territory has been the haunt of Turkomans, who came to rob the people of the Khorassan, and that the numerous bands of Mervians who in 1879-81 came to the assistance of their kinsmen of the Akhal passed through the Atek without the Persian Government being able to offer the slightest resistance to their transit. His Excellency claims that the improvement in the present condition of that country is only due to the military prestige of Russia, and that the safety which has been established can only be insured by the exercise of constant vigilance on the part of the authorities of the Transcaspian province.

His Excellency concludes by saying that as this supervision offers effective guarantees against the renewal of troubles and complications in Central Asia, the Imperial Government hope that Her Majesty's Government will not hesitate to recognize the justice of their views.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, February* 14 (26), 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have received a communication from the British Minister at Tehran to the effect that Mr. Condie Stephen had telegraphed from Chacha, under date of the 12th, 14th, and 16th instant (N. S.), that on his road he had met a Russian subject named Knoss, who in dictatorial terms tried to prevent him from entering the Ateks, and had said that he must await at Chacha the result of a reference to the Akhal authorities. Mr. Stephen refused to recognize the right of this gentleman to interfere with his movements in Persian territory, and in view of the friendly relations which exist between the two Governments, insisted upon being treated with courtesy. On the 15th instant M. Knoss rode out from Chacha to prevent a fresh escort from arriving from Kelat, stating that he would use force to prevent Mr. Stephen from proceeding to Kelat until an answer should be received from Askabad. The Persian officer in command of the escort stated that he had received orders to come and meet Mr. Stephen, and must carry them out.

Finally, M. Knoss allowed the escort to arrive, but his language was violent and unreasonable. On the 16th instant M. Knoss received instructions not to interfere with Mr. Stephen's movements, and the latter proceeded on his road to Kelat.

In compliance with instructions which I have received from Earl Granville, I have the honour to call your Excellency's attention to this matter, and to request that such orders may be issued as will in future prevent such unjustifiable interference on the part of a Russian official with the movements of a British subject in Persian territory.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 86.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Département Asiatique,
M. l'Ambassadeur, *le* 20 *Février*, 1883.

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser, en date du 14 (26) courant, au sujet de l'opposition que Mr. Condie Stephen aurait rencontrée lors de sa dernière tournée dans l'Atek, de la part d'un nommé M. Knoss, sujet Russe.

N'ayant reçu d'aucune part des informations relativement aux incidents auxquels il est fait allusion dans la susdite note, le Ministère Impérial ne saurait, pour sa part,

attribuer qu'à un malentendu les faits qui ont motivé les plaintes de Mr. Stephen, et il s'est déjà fait un devoir d'intervenir auprès de qui de droit pour les éclaircir.

Tout en me réservant de porter en temps utile à la connaissance de votre Excellence les informations qui auront été fournies au Ministère par les autorités compétentes, je ne puis m'empêcher de vous faire observer, M. l'Ambassadeur, que le Cabinet Impérial se voit dans une complète impossibilité d'admettre que l'Atek puisse être considéré comme partie intégrante de la Perse.

Il n'est que trop bien connu que de tout temps ce territoire a servi de repaire aux Turcomans qui venait assouvir leur rapacité aux dépens de la population du Khorassan, et que c'est par la voie de l'Atek que se sont dirigées les nombreuses bandes de Merviens, qui en 1879-81 se sont successivement portées au secours de leurs congénères d'Akhal, sans que le Gouvernement Persan eût pu opposer la moindre résistance à leur passage. Il est vrai que cet état de choses s'est considérablement amélioré depuis la conquête de l'Oasis d'Akhal Téké par les troupes Russes, mais il n'en est pas moins certain que cette amélioration n'est due qu'au prestige militaire de la Russie, et que la sécurité qui s'est établie dans ces parages ne saurait être maintenue qu'à la condition qu'une surveillance rigoureuse soit exercée par les autorités de la Province Transcaspienne sur l'attitude et les mouvements des populations Turcomanes établies dans l'Atek, ainsi que sur ces confins.

Cette surveillance étant de nature à offrir d'efficaces garanties contre le retour des troubles et des complications dans l'Asie Centrale, le Cabinet Impérial ss plaît à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique n'hésitera pas à reconnaître la justesse du point de vue ci-dessus énoncé.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Asiatic Department,
February 20, 1883.

M. l'Ambassadeur,

I HAVE received the note which your Excellency has done me the honour to address to me, dated the 14th (26th) instant, respecting the opposition which Mr. Condie Stephen seems to have encountered during his recent journey in the Atek on the part of Mr. Knoss, a Russian subject.

Having received no information whatever relative to the incidents to which allusion is made in the above-mentioned note, the Imperial Ministry can only attribute the facts which have caused the complaints of Mr. Stephen to a misunderstanding, and steps have been already taken to obtain full information from the proper sources.

While waiting to bring to the knowledge of your Excellency at the proper moment the information which will be furnished to the Ministry by the competent authorities, I cannot but observe, M. l'Ambassadeur, that the Imperial Cabinet considers that it is quite impossible to admit that the Atek can be considered as an integral part of Persia.

It is but too well known that for a long time this district has served as a haunt for the Turkomans who came to satisfy their marauding propensities at the expense of the population of Khorassan, and it is by the Atek that the numerous hordes of Mervites advanced, who in 1879-81 successively carried help to their kinsmen of Akhal without Persia being able to offer the slightest resistance to their passage. It is true that this state of affairs has considerably improved since the conquest of the Akhal Téké Oasis by Russian troops, but it is none the less certain that this amelioration is only due to the military prestige of Russia, and that the security established in these parts can only be maintained by the exercise of a rigorous supervision by the Transcaspian authorities over the attitude and the movements of the Turkoman populations established in the Atek as well as in the neighbourhood.

This supervision being of a nature to offer effective guarantees against the renewal of troubles and complications in Central Asia, the Imperial Cabinet hopes that the Government of Her Britannic Majesty will not hesitate to recognize the justice of the views above expressed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 87.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 9.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 5, 1883.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th February, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that some comments have appeared in the "Golos" newspaper on a letter addressed to that journal by M. Lessar on the subject of diverting the Amou Daria into its supposed former bed leading into the Caspian.

As a result of scientific investigations on the above subject, it would appear that the project of joining the Aral and Caspian seas by diverting the waters of the Amou Daria into the Ouzboi is impracticable. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that an ordinary canal for navigation and irrigation could be made, but at a cost of from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 roubles.

On this point M. Lessar is of opinion that the cost of the above undertaking would be far beyond the realizable profits. For the present the chief care of the Government should be to develop the trade of Central Asia by guaranteeing the security of the trade routes. Many more pressing undertakings are necessary in Russia in Europe, but it is evident that in the future the increased commerce of Central Asia will necessitate the construction of new water-ways, no matter at what cost, and consequently the projected canal should be kept in view.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 88.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord, *Tehran, February 9, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a Report, dated the 22nd January, stating that the Merv Chiefs had agreed to the peremptory demand made by the Russians for the surrender of the murderers of the two Russians who were lately killed by a Merv raiding party near Chahchaheh, and that the culprits had been sent to Askabad to be handed over to the Russian authorities there.

It also appears that the Russians are now desirous that Makhtum Kuli Khan should be accepted by the Merv Elders as their paramount Chief, and that the tribes are generally disposed to recognize him in that position.

The Khan of Khiva had appointed Rahman Baï to succeed the late Yusuf Baï as his Agent, or nominal Governor, at Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 88.

(Translation.) *January 22, 1883.*

KONAS, who had been sent to Merv by the Russians to demand the surrender of the murderers of the three Russians, has been successful in his mission, and is now on his way back to Askabad.

The murderers, four in number, were delivered up to him, but one of them escaped at Kahkaha. Konas told the Kahkaha people that they must either catch the fugitive or make over one of their own men as a hostage in his place. Forty of the local horsemen at once started in pursuit.

Konas is said to have engaged twenty horsemen at Kahkaha and thirty at Tejjen at a salary of 10 tomans a-month.

Before leaving Merv the Russian emissary informed the Oktamish and Toktamish tribes that Makhtum Kuli Khan's authority must be accepted as paramount, and that the Elders of Merv must at once seize and send on to Askabad any person disobeying his orders. Makhtum Kuli Khan has been recognized as Chief by the Elders, but not without some resistance on the part of the younger members of the tribes.

The Khan of Khiva has sent a personage named Rahman Baï to be nominal Governor of Merv, in the place of Yusuf Baï, deceased. The Khan of Khiva is said to have told Rahman Baï that his nomination was due to the instances of the Oktamish and Toktamish tribes, and that he should claim full obedience from them. If they refused to obey him, he should at once return to Khiva.

No. 89.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 19.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, February* 9, 1883.

SINCE his arrival here Ayub Khan has been living in great seclusion. He seldom presents himself at Court, and, with the exception of the first visits which he exchanged with the Shah's Ministers and some of the Princes, he seems to have had no intercourse with any of the influential people in Tehran.

I have no ground for believing that he contemplates leaving Tehran at present, but as it has been said by some of his adherents that he hoped to return to Meshed in the spring, I have thought it right to speak to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and his Excellency has assured me that, in the event of his applying to the Shah for permission to return to Khorassan, the proposal would certainly not be entertained by the Persian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 90.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 19.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, February* 17, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 11th December last, in which I stated that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had again endeavoured to induce the Russian Government to appoint its Commissioner, and proceed at once with the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan boundary, as stipulated in the IInd Clause of the Russo-Persian Frontier Treaty of December 1881, I have now the honour to report to your Lordship that Mirza Saïd Khan has informed me that his representations on this subject have had no effect, the same reply which was formerly given having again been repeated, namely, that the severe cold of winter, and the incompleteness of the frontier surveys, rendered it impossible for the Commission to meet at present, and that the matter must therefore be deferred till spring.

No. 91.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 19.)

My Lord, *Tehran, February* 18, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram which Mr. Stephen has sent me from Noroozabad, near Sarakhs, reporting that he had some days previously met a large party of Saryk Turkomans, who were returning from a raid on the Persian territory, and that his escort of Salor Turkomans, who had accompanied him from Zoorabad, had attempted to defend the passage of the river at Pul-i-Khatun, but had been unable to prevent the raiders from making good their escape to the other side of the Heri-Rud. His escort consisted of seventy men, and the Saryk Turkomans numbered about 300. Notwithstanding this disproportion of numbers, the Salor horsemen, no doubt tempted by the prospect of recovering some of the booty and securing prisoners, insisted, contrary to Mr. Stephen's advice, upon following the raiding party after they had crossed the river, and they were repulsed with some loss. None of Mr. Stephen's party were injured.

A detailed report of this occurrence has not yet reached me, but I shall probably receive it by next week's post from Meshed.

The Prince-Governor of Khorassan has reported to his Government that he had sent a considerable body of horse to Mr. Stephen's assistance, and His Royal Highness takes credit for having thereby secured the safety of the party; this statement is not, however, altogether accurate, as Mr. Stephen reports that the Saryks retreated to the other side of the river after half-an-hour's skirmishing at an old fort in which his party had taken refuge.

In speaking to me yesterday on this subject, the Shah seemed to be of opinion that the Saryk Turkomans had come expressly with the object of attacking

Mr. Stephen's party, but this does not coincide with the statement of the latter that they were returning from a raiding expedition on the Persian side of the Heri-Rud.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMPSON.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Mr. Stephen to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Noroozabad, February* 6, 1883.

TWO days ago, party escorted by seventy Salor Turkomans had an encounter at Pul-i-Khatun with 300 Saryk Turkomans who were returning from a raid. We occupied ruined fort, and defended the passage of the river. After half-an-hour's firing latter retreated. Afterwards, notwithstanding my repeated orders not to do so on account of disproportion in numbers, escort followed Saryk into the desert; there second engagement took place, escort being routed, losing 13 killed, 6 wounded. All my party uninjured.

Have surveyed Heri-Rud route and streams from Afghan frontier. Proceed to-morrow to Sarakhs, and thence up Ateks with reinforcements.

No. 92.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord, *Tehran, February* 20, 1883.

I HAVE received telegrams from Mr. Stephen, from Chacha, on the north-eastern frontier of Khorassan, in which he gives an account of the difficulties cast in his way by a Russian Agent named Knoss, and the manner in which the question was ultimately settled.

The hold, such as it was, which the Persians formerly had over the Turkoman Settlements in the Ateks of Dereghez and Kelat has of late, since the occupation of Akhal by Russia, been greatly relaxed, and the proceedings of the Russian Agent at Chacha, who attempted to prevent Mr. Stephen from prosecuting his journey along that portion of the Persian frontier, appear to indicate clearly that the Russians, though they have not yet taken military possession of the country, are gradually assuming complete jurisdiction over the whole Atek region.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 93.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 14, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Adam, Second Secretary to this Embassy, of an article in the official Gazette of this day's date, giving a detailed account of the attack made upon M. Parfenieff, a Russian engineer. It is stated that three of the Cossacks who were with him were killed. The place at which the attack was made was at about 32 versts from Chacha, and 40from Sarakhs.

It could not have been very far from the point where an attempt was made by a Russian official, M. Knoss, to detain Mr. Condie Stephen. M. de Giers asserts that this point is not within Persian territory, though I presume that the Persian Government would maintain an opposite view. It does not appear, however, from the inclosed narrative that the Russian officials exercised any acts of jurisdiction at Chacha or its neighbourhood with regard to the attack on M. Parfenieff, but sent in search of the guilty parties to Merv, where they had taken refuge. The man Berdy Abu, who is stated to have been imprisoned at Askabad, has since been reported to have been executed.

From the statements in the inclosed article it is clear that there is more than one

Russian surveying party in the Ateks, and that the Russian authorities are making preparations for its ultimate occupation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 93.

Extract from the Official Gazette, St. Petersburgh, March $\frac{2}{14}$, 1883.

(Translation.)

FROM official information relative to the attack upon the Topographer Parfenieff by Mervites, in November last, it appears that Parfenieff was carrying on surveys on the road from Meshed to Merv, 32 versts from the village of Chacha, and 40 from the Persian fortress of Sarakhs.

This place is called Khan-Giran, and is situated 280 versts from Askabad.

The attack of the Mervites occurred on the 10th November, at dawn. The robbers wounded Parfenieff, killed three of the Cossacks who were with them, and plundered the baggage (the surveying instruments escaped uninjured, only the screws being withdrawn from the plane table).

On receipt of information of the occurrence at Askabad, a sotnia of Cossacks of the Taman regiment was fitted out without delay for the protection of further topographical work; negotiations were entered into with the Khans of the four Merv tribes for the surrender of the robbers; application was made to the Head of the Section of Topographical Surveys for information respecting the condition of the wounded Parfenieff, the names of the killed, and the manner in which the guide, the Téké militiaman, and the fourth Cossack, who were with Parfenieff, had made their escape; and, lastly, news of the occurrence was telegraphed to the Governor-General, and likewise communicated to Tehran.

The sotnia of Cossacks left Askabad on the 14th November, reached Lutfabad on the 16th, and the village of Kaakhka (120 versts from Askabad) on the 20th. Here it was informed that the surveying party were already on their way to Kaakhka, and accordingly remained at that place.

Meanwhile, information reached Askabad that the robbers numbered forty men, that their leader was a Mervite of the tribe of Kara Achmet, named Berdy Abu, that Parfenoff had received a slight wound in the head from a scimitar, but had succeeded on the same day in reaching the village of Chacha; that an hour later the surviving Cossack, Zinchenko, and the guide, had also reached that place; that the Cossacks killed were Berdnik (non-commissioned officer), Dubinsky, and Borsuk; and that, at the time of the attack, the militiaman had been sent off to the Chief of the Section of Surveys, Captain Maslovsky. On receipt of these statements, on the 17th November, Makhtum Kuli Khan was dispatched to Merv, with special instructions to facilitate the detection of the guilty parties and their speedy surrender.

Subsequently, on the 23rd November, Parfenieff and the Cossack Zinchenko arrived at Askabad, and having both recovered from their wounds, they made a personal statement of the details of the occurrence.

In this the moment of the Mervites' attack was related as follows:—

On the morning of the 10th November, when the dawn had just begun to appear, a deafening shout, uttered by several voices, resounded about the camp; this led Parfenoff to put out his hand for his revolver; but before he could arm himself he received two scimitar-cuts in succession, one on the collar of his coat and the other on his head; after the latter blow he rushed out of his tent. Parfenieff succeeded in effecting his escape, owing to the fact that the robber who attacked him turned his attention to plundering.

The Cossacks, when the shouting occurred, were in the following positions: Zinchenko was sitting by the camp-fire, Berdnik walking about the camp, Borsuk was washing, and Dubinsky lying down.

The latter was at once cut down; the rest were seized, bound, and laid on the ground; at the same time they were kicked, and struck with the butt-ends of guns.

After this, the robbers seized the baggage, and after setting fire to whatever was not convenient to carry away, including the supply of forage, they took the surviving Cossacks and the guide, and started for Tedjent; of the prisoners, they cut down Borsuk on the way, when, in consequence of his wound, he was unable to go further;

and, after some time, they also shot Berdnik. Zinchenko and the guide were released 4 versts from Tedjent. Lastly, the guide declared that he was bound while asleep, and that as he followed as a prisoner, he pleaded with the Mervites for himself and the Cossacks, but did not win them over to indulgence till after the murder of Berdnik and Borsuk.

At Chacha Parfenieff hired horsemen to search for the bodies of the dead. The bodies were soon discovered and buried. There Parfenieff also learnt the departure from Merv of a considerable party of marauders in the direction of Sarakhs; the Commandant of the Persian fortress of Sarakhs advised our surveying parties not to venture too far from Sarakhs.

The Commander of the Cossack sotnia stated that, previously to his arrival at Lutfabad, the Mervites had driven off 1,500 sheep belonging to the inhabitants, but that one-half of these had been recovered by the Persians, who pursued after them; and that it was reported that 1,000 horsemen and 1,000 foot had left Merv on a raid, but that they were not acting with united forces, but divided into small parties.

This report of 2,000 marauders was shown by the evidence of M. Lessar, the engineer, to be exaggerated.

The leader of another surveying party, Second Lieutenant Vekiloff, has reported that his camp also, in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs, was approached by thirty mounted Mervites, but Vekiloff succeeded in preparing for resistance, and by threatening to fire upon them warded off the attack.

The formal investigation ordered in this case at first proceeded but slowly, owing to the absence of any individual culprits, but in the first days of December a certain Yagmyr Khan, who was implicated in the matter, was sent from Merv; his participation, it was said, was limited to pointing out to the band of marauders the possibility of attacking the Russian surveyors.

With the arrival of Yagmyr Khan at Askabad, the inquiry began to bring to light other guilty parties, and, on the discovery of their names, demands for their surrender were sent to Merv. The leading culprit of the band, Berdy Abu, whom the Mervites at first declined to surrender, was arrested by Sergeant-Major of Militia Prince Morgany (or Morshany), who was sent to Merv for that express purpose. Berdy Abu is now confined in the central guard-house at Askabad.

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No. 94.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received April 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, extract of a letter from the Viceroy of India to His Highness the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 22nd February, 1883, relative to the engagements between the British Government and that of Afghanistan.

India Office, April 5, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 94.

The Viceroy and Governor-General of India to Ameer Abdul Rahman Khan.

Fort William, February 22, 1883.

MANY vague rumours are doubtless afloat, but they are, for the most part, without foundation, and need cause your Highness no uneasiness, more especially as, under the engagements of 1880, which are embodied in the Memorandum presented to your Highness by Sir Lepel Griffin in that year, your Highness is in possession of the assurance of the British Government that, if any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you—to such extent and in such manner as may appear to the British Government necessary—in repelling it, provided that your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations.

Under these circumstances your Highness need be under no apprehension, but

may rest in secure reliance that the British Government has both the will and the power to make good all its engagements with your Highness.

I beg to express the high consideration I entertain for your Highness, and to subscribe myself your Highness' sincere friend.

No. 95.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 9, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April* 9, 1883, 4 P.M.

MR. STEPHEN returned here from Khorassan on the 7th instant.

No. 96.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 11, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the $\frac{24\text{th March}}{5\text{th April}}$, 1883, states that Lieutenant-General Komaroff, Chief of the Military Educational Section of the Caucasus, will succeed General Röhrberg as Chief of the Trans-Caucasian region. General Röhrberg, the account states, has been appointed to the command of the 25th Division.

I have not yet been able to ascertain whether the above-mentioned statement is well founded.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 97.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 16, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Turkestan Gazette" of the $\frac{22\text{nd February}}{6\text{th March}}$ last referring to surveys which have recently been made by Russian authorities in different parts of Central Asia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Extract from the "Turkestan Gazette" of $\frac{\text{February } 22}{\text{March } 6}$, 1883.

ON the $\frac{4}{16}$th February the Governor-General of Turkestan inspected the topographical work executed during the year 1882, and which is to be forwarded to St. Petersburgh and submitted to His Imperial Majesty. Among this extremely interesting material, the following attracted special notice:—The surveys of the Ferghanah region, excellently executed; march-route surveys from Meshed viâ Sarakhs and Merv to Chardjui, and a map of the Merv oasis based on verbal data. The foregoing are all geographical novelties. The two last-mentioned works were compiled on information furnished by Lieutenant Naziroff, of the 1st Turkestan Rifle Battalion, who last year accomplished a very hazardous journey from Astrabad, viâ Meshed, Merv, Chardjui, and Bokhara, to Tashkent. The surveys of Karategin and Darvaz were made by M. Kossiakoff, who accompanied Mr. Regel on his journey through Darvaz. In order to survey as much ground as possible, M. Kossiakoff separated from Mr. Regel at Hissar, and proceeded by the valley of the River Kaffirnagan to Kobadian, Kurgan-tubi, Kuliab, and Darvaz, where he rejoined Mr. Regel. Early in September M. Kossiakoff returned to Tashkent, and Regel proceeded farther to Shugan, where he wintered.

Moreover, particular notice was directed to the astronomical observations and surveys of the steppe of Kizyl-kum, executed by Captain Putiata; the magnetic

observations of F. Schwartz, astronomer; the labours of the Tashkent Observatory, and the surveys of the Ust-Urt, from Kungrad to Taman-Kairakt on the Caspian, executed by Colonel Alexandroff. A detailed survey of this part of the country is specially interesting, as the chief trade route from Central Asia to Russia will undoubtedly pass that way. We are informed that the Chief of the Turkestan region has nearly brought to a conclusion the question of constructing a line of railway across that part of the country, which would connect the whole basin of the Oxus with the Caspian Sea. Steam navigation on the Oxus and a line of railway across the Ust-Urt will at length solve the question raised by Peter the Great of a direct route from the Volga to Central Asia.

St. Petersburgh, April 14, 1883.

No. 98.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 23.)

My Lord, *Tehran, March* 1, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a despatch I have received from Mr. Stephen, giving details respecting the progress of his journey on the north-eastern frontier of Khorassan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 98.

Mr. Stephen to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Sarakhs, February* 10, 1883.

ON the 6th instant I had the honour to address to your Excellency a telegram from Noroosabad, reporting that two days previously our party had had an encounter at Pul-i-Khatoon with 300 Sarik Turkomans, who were returning from a raid. The details of the affair are as follows:—

Early on the 3rd we set out from Zoorabad with an escort of seventy Salor Turkomans, and after crossing the Yedi Pass, encamped that night on the banks of the Heri-Rud, some short distance from the Germab Pass. It appears that on the previous day two Salors had left Zoorabad for Pul-i-Khatoon, in the neighbourhood of which spot there are a few tents inhabited by Turkomans of that tribe. According to the statement of one of them, who subsequently effected his escape, both were captured the following evening by the marauding party, who had the day before carried off some cattle and camels from the said small settlement. News of its arrival had already been dispatched to Zoorabad and Meshed, but as the messenger carrying the news to Zoorabad took a different route to the one we had chosen, it was not until we issued the next day from the mountains and perceived a large body of horsemen about a mile distant on the left bank of the Keshef-Rud that we became aware of the presence of an Alaman. The equipment of my escort being far from satisfactory, and as it was evident that the Sariks were in large force, I at once dispatched a messenger to Zoorabad for assistance, meanwhile instructing Takir Khan, the Salor Chief who accompanied me, to advance and defend the passage of the river, but to avoid, if possible, a general engagement, until I had time to repair the defences of a ruined caravanserai, which had meanwhile been occupied by our servants and the mules. Hearing firing in front, and news being brought to me that the Sariks had learnt (probably from the two Salors they had captured) that we were an English party, and had declared their intention of seizing me and my property, I directed my servants to open fire upon them with my rifles.

Having, in the meantime, by the aid of the muleteers, hastily repaired the gaps in the walls with stones and baggage, and seeing that, if it came to the worst, we were now in a position to make a fairly good defence until assistance arrived, I advanced with one of my servants to the river's edge, and opened a brisk fire upon the "Alaman" with a Winchester and Snider rifle. The result was satisfactory. Probably thinking that we were better armed than we were, and seeing that, even if they succeeded in routing my escort it would be no easy matter to storm the kale, they began to retreat slowly towards the desert. Fearing that we might be attacked

during the night, or on our way to Sarakhs the next day, under more unfavourable conditions, I proposed immediately following up our success by charging the marauders while they were still on low ground and in retreat, expressing my willingness to accompany the escort with my rifles. I am of opinion that, had my advice been followed, we would have succeeded, with little loss, in routing the Alaman, and recapturing the camels and cattle. As it was, valuable time was lost in discussion, and, when some twenty minutes later, Takir Khan proposed following it into the desert, I repeatedly ordered him not to do so, thinking it would now be folly to risk an engagement with so large a force so far from our base. Notwithstanding my orders, however, the Salors persisted in doing so; and, it appears that, two hours later on, some 8 miles from Pul-i-Khatoon, with their backs to the Heri-Rud, they attacked the Sariks, who, seeing that they were followed, had halted at the top of a hill. The result was that the Salors were completely defeated, thirteen being killed and six wounded.

Early the next morning a reinforcement of some forty horsemen and twenty foot arrived from Zoorabad, but being unwilling to proceed on my journey until I had done what I could to tend the wounded with the lint and bandages I had with me, I postponed my departure till the next day. Meanwhile I dispatched a message to Sarakhs, requesting that an escort might be sent to meet me at Noroosabad, in order that the Sálors, who were much fatigued, might return the sooner to their homes. Yusuf Mohammed Khan, who, in the absence of his father, is temporarily in charge of the fortress of Sarakhs, promptly complied with my request, coming himself to meet me. Nothing, in fact, could be more satisfactory than the ready way the authorities acted in the matter, and although Takir Khan was wrong in not following my advice, yet I would wish to record that both he and his companions throughout displayed considerable pluck.

I trust that in thus entering into details it will not be imagined that I would wish any unnecessary importance to be attached to this affray. My object is to place your Excellency in possession of the true facts, in case the Persian Government should attempt to make out that the regrettable loss of life was owing to my not having sooner informed the authorities of my intention of selecting this route.

I would venture to submit that the language held by the marauders, as reported above, is of itself sufficient evidence that I did well to keep my proposed route secret as long as possible. So long as Takir Khan carried out my directions, all went well, and had he not been rash enough to follow the Sariks into the desert, there would probably have been no loss of life to record.

I have to report that I have carefully surveyed the Heri-Rud route and stream from the neighbourhood of Kafir Kaleh to this place. I proceed to-morrow up the Ateks to Kelat, with a strong escort of eighty horsemen, with which the Acting Governor of Sarakhs has been good enough to provide me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

No. 99.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 23.)

My Lord, *Tehran, March 9, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith translation of a letter which I have received reporting that the Agent of the Khan of Khiva, whose authority is recognized by the Téké tribes of Merv, has induced the Saryk tribes at Yulatan to place themselves likewise under his control and government. Similar overtures had been made by him to the Salor tribes at Penjdeh, but it appears that these had not been favourably received.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 99.

(Translation.) *February 23, 1883.*

A HUNDRED Russians arrived at Merv to claim the Government, but Rahman Bai coming from Khiva with 200 horsemen also claimed authority over Merv. The Russians refused to recognize Rahman Bai unless he produced a letter from the

Emperor of Russia, which Rahman Bai having done, the Russians retired to the Akhal territory, and Rahman Bai remained at Merv as Governor. Rahman Bai subsequently sent a messenger to Yulatan to summon the Saryk Chiefs to Merv. After giving them presents he nominated a Governor for Yulatan whom they accepted. Rahman also sent to Penjdeh to inform the inhabitants that they, too, were to receive a Governor from Merv. The Penjdeh people refused to acknowledge Rahman Bai's authority, declaring that they were subjects of Herat, but that if he would restore to them their inheritance in the lands of Merv, now held by the Tékés, they would migrate to Merv in a body.

No. 100.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 20, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "St. Petersburgh Vedomosti," of the $\frac{7}{19}$th April contains a telegram from its correspondent at Kizil Arvat, under date of the $\frac{6}{18}$th April, to the effect that the Amu Daria expedition for surveying the western portion of the Uzboi left Bala-Ishar on the $\frac{14}{26}$th March.

M. Lessar, accompanied by M. Konchin, mining engineer, and Lieutenant Khabalow, left Kizil Arvat on the $\frac{6}{18}$th April. This expedition has for its object the exploration of the Chardjui branch of the Oxus and the central parts of the Kara Kum desert, and also the water communication between Bokhara and Askabad.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 101.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 25, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation of extracts from three numbers of the "Invalide Russe" relating to surveys in Central Asia which have been made by Russian officials, and which, in addition to many other proceedings, tend to show how deep an interest the Russian Government are now taking in all that region.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 101.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of April $\frac{7}{19}$, $\frac{8}{20}$, and $\frac{9}{21}$, 1883.

(Translation.)

Survey of Work done by the Topographical Department of the Russian War Office during the Year 1882.

WORK executed by Caucasian section of Military Topographical Department:—

In the Transcaspian region the topographers surveyed and mapped the country on a scale of 2 versts, from the Tchekishlar post, across Chat, the mountains of Massiner Chacha to Sarakhs, inclusive. The survey proceeded in a wide zone, embracing on each side the environs of the fort of Molla-Kari, the Island of Ashur-Ade, the Gulf of Hassan-Kuli, the upper part of the River Attrek, a portion of the Akhal Téké oasis between Geok-Tépé and Artchman, and a slip of Persian territory in the neighbourhood of Boojnoord.

This survey enables the frontier-line to be drawn between the Transcaspian region and Persia along the whole of its length, a distance of 592 versts.

The transmission of astronomical observations, in the neighbourhood of Attek, from the hills to the plains, was rendered difficult by thick mists which are of frequent occurrence in this locality from the month of June to September. The absence of water and forage, the high temperature, which reached 35 to 36 degrees Réaumur, and other obstacles, greatly retarded the work.

Among the astronomical labours of the Caucasian section executed during 1882, the following are deserving of attention: (1) Determination of the longitude of Tiflis and Rostoff on the Don, the extreme point of telegraphic determination in European Russia; this work joined all the trigonometrical and astronomical determinations in the Caucasus with those made in Russia proper; (2) the chronometrical expedition in the Transcaspian region, which extended to Merv inclusively.

The following are the principal maps compiled and revised by the Caucasian section during 1882: (1) new map of the Caucasus on a scale of 5 versts to the inch; (2) newly revised 5-, 10-, and 20-verst map of the Caucasus, 50-verst map of Asiatic Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Beloochistan; and (3) a map in relief of the theatre of war in 1877 and 1878 in Asiatic Turkey, with the adjoining country.

Work executed by the Turkestan section of the Military Topographical Department in 1882:—

Systematic survey of the Ferghana region in the neighbourhood of Marghelan and Namangan.

The survey of routes from Kungrad to the Gulf of Mertvy-Kultuk was undertaken by Colonel Alexandroff with the object of ascertaining how far the road from Kungrad to the Bay of Yaman-Airakty, on the Caspian, was practicable for wheeled vehicles. The idea of using this road for carts was started by Vanushin, a merchant of Uralsk, who sent a consignment of fish from the sea of Aral to Astrakhan.

The distance from Kungrad across the Tchink, on the Ust-Urt, to the Bay of Yaman-Airakty is 447 versts. On the return journey Colonel Alexandroff turned off at the wells of Amandjul, along another road more northerly, at the Chibin descent from the Ust-Urt. The ground passed over was hard, consisting of sand and stone, and quite practicable for carts. The ascent at Tchink-Adjul, and the descent to the Caspian Sea through the defiles of the Djagulgan, are very convenient for carts. The ascent at Tchibin would require some slight amelioration. There are no prominent physical features along the route, with the exception of several ruins of Khirghiz graves. The water supply from Kungrad to the ascent at Tchink is adequate, and then occurs a waterless tract of 135 versts to the wells of Tabyn-su, beyond which water is again plentiful. Along the northern route, the longest waterless march is 60 versts. The depth of the wells is from 10 to 29 arshins, and the depth of water is from 1 to 2½ arshins; the wells are everywhere lined with stones.

Prickly shrubs and the "saksaul" plant grow nearly along the whole route.

The construction of a landing-stage in the Bay of Yaman-Airakty is quite practicable. Whether it is possible for steamers to enter Mertvy-Kultuk and approach the Bay of Yaman-Airakty Colonel Alexandroff does not say.

The work in the Syr-Darya region consisted of surveys of the towns of Perofsk and Aulie-Ata, and in rectifying the surveys of Tashkend and the Kuramin district.

The roads through the passes of Abiaz, Kara-Mizar, Shagraz, Shant-Davan, were also explored, and a detailed survey made of the roads through the pass of Kendyr-Davan, to the Chilmakhram ford on the Syr-Darya, with the object of selecting the most convenient line of country for a road from Tashkend to Kokand.

M. Kossiakoff, who was attached to the scientific expedition to Darvaz and Shugnan undertaken by Dr. Regel, left Pendshakent with the expedition on the $\frac{4}{16}$th July. At Hissar the expedition divided. Dr. Regel proceeded along the mountainous road to Baldjuan, and M. Kossiakoff descended along the River Karátag to the town of Kobadian, whence, viâ Kuran-tubi and Kuliab, he reached Kala-i-Khumb. From this point M. Kossiakoff pursued his explorations upwards along the River Piandj to Fort Vandj, and further along the River Vandj to its upper course. Returning to Kala-i-Khumb, he proceeded northwards to Fort Tavildara, on the River Vaksh (Hullias), and then upwards along the right bank of that river to the town of Kurgan-Ladjur. After having explored the upper course of the Ak-su River, Kossiakoff joined Dr. Regel at Kala-i-Khumb for the purpose of making explorations in Shugnan. This expedition, however, was abandoned, owing to the length of time that elapsed before permission was received from the Ruler of Shugnan to enter his territory, and M. Kossiakoff, ultimately falling ill, was compelled to hasten his return to Samarcand. Proceeding from Kala-i-Khumb to Talvar, down the River Ak-su to Fort Sarypul, and further to Baldjnan, Dushambe, Dinau, and Baisun, M. Kossiakoff continued his march-route survey to Yar-Tubè, where, in consequence of the state of his health, he was compelled to abandon the work, and proceed to Samarcand. M. Kossiakoff drew up march-routes of about 1,400 versts, the angles being determined graphically by the aid of a small plane, and the distance by paces. An interesting description of the routes traversed is annexed to the march-routes.

During 1882 Captain Putiata explored the following routes in the Turkestan region: (1) the road from the station of Kara-Kuduk to the station of Maili-Bash (204¾ versts); (2) from the station of Djulus to the station of Kura-Tugai (252⅔ versts); and (3)from the station of Djumos to the station of Ak-Suat (231¼ versts).

The object of the expedition to Kizil-Kum was to determine astronomically a series of points by which all the surveys executed by various departments could be grouped together, and also to revise the maps of these surveys.

Captain Putiata determined in all fifteen points in Kara-Kum and in Kizil-Kum

During 1882 Lieutenant-Colonel Pomerantseff and Captain Zalesky determined the difference in the longitude of Tashkend and Samarcand.

The longitudinal difference between Pendshakent and Samarcand was determined chronometrically.

The trigonometrical survey of the Zaravshan executed in 1874 was extended in 1882 in the direction of Pendshakent, between the left banks of the Zaravshan and the southern forelands of the Zaravshan for a distance of 900 square versts.

No. 102.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 14.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April* 6, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 17th February last, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I am now informed that the Russian Government have announced to the Government of Persia that their surveys being now completed, they have appointed a Commissioner, and are prepared to proceed with the work of demarcation. The Persian Government have appointed Suleiman Khan as their Representative on the Commission, which, I understand, is to commence its labours some time in May.

I may add that an understanding has been arrived at between the two Governments to the effect that the work of the Commission is to begin with the settlement of the questions which have arisen as to the possession of the Hussein Kuli Settlement at the mouth of the Attrek, and the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans, and which are explained at greater length in my despatches of the 26th February and 1st May of last year, and in the Report from the Asterabad Agent which is inclosed in my despatch of the 5th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 103.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 9, 1883.

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the $\frac{27\text{th April}}{9\text{th May}}$, 1883, publishes an account of the new trade route from Russia to Central Asia recently explored by M. Rosheff, a merchant of Orenburg, who was sent by the Russian Sea and Overland Transport Company to investigate the routes to Central Asia from Bokhara viâ Khiva, and thence by way of Kizil Arvat to the terminus of the Transcaspian Railway.

M. Rosheff started on his journey on the $\frac{1}{26}$th December last, and reached Bokhara on the $\frac{11\text{th}}{23\text{rd}}$ February by way of Orsk, Irgiz, and Kazalinsk. On visiting the bazaar M. Rosheff found there an immense quantity of English goods, *i.e.*, prints, muslins, handkerchiefs, dyes, sugar, and green tea, sent to Bokhara viâ Afghanistan. Although these goods were sold at a rate only slightly dearer than Russian goods, the former were more readily purchased by the natives, especially by those of the better classes. M. Rosheff attributes their favourable competition of English goods principally to the alleged fact that they are imported into Bokhara free of duty, and partly to the cost of transport of Russian goods. This state of things, however, M. Rosheff considers will be materially altered when the new trade route is opened from Russia to Bokhara, by way of Karakul, to the landing-place at Ust-Kurgan, on the Oxus; thence down the Oxus to Petro-Alexandrofsk, to Kungrad, by way of the Ust-Urt, to Mertvoi Kultuk and the Yaman-Arakt landing-place. The distance from Kungrad to

Yaman-Arakt is, according to M. Rosheff's calculation, 434 versts (289⅓ versts*). General Tchernaieff has already dispatched Colonel Alexandroff (who surveyed this route in 1881), to further investigate and improve the new trade route from Kungrad to Mertvoi Kultuk.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 104.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 16, 1·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, May* 16, 1883.

I HEAR that Eyoub Khan has asked Persian Government for permission to quit Tehran, and that he means to leave with or without permission. His intention is stated to be to go by Resht to Bokhara, to promote movement against Ameer in Turkestan.

No. 105.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 16, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to a telegram from Tashkent, published this day in the Russian newspapers, General Tchernaieff, Governor of Turkestan, started from Petro-Alexandrovsk on the Oxus for Kungrad on the $\frac{\text{1st April}}{\text{32rd May}}$, from whence it was his intention to proceed to the Caspian across the Ust-Urt. It is said that the object of his journey is to make himself acquainted with the new route from the Oxus to the Caspian. He will be back at Tashkent by the $\frac{17\text{th}}{29\text{th}}$ May.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 106.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 1, 12·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, June* 1, 1883, 11·44 A.M.

EYOUB KHAN has informed the Persian Government that he adheres to his resolution to quit Tehran and the Persian territory, and that if they desire to prevent his doing so, they must employ force. This I think the Shah will not use, unless in the event of his attempting to go to Meshed.

No. 107.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 4, 1·10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, June* 4, 1883.

COUNCIL of Ministers have been twice summoned to consider question of Eyoub Khan's detention. They admit obligation to prevent disturbance of Afghan frontier from Persian territory, and recommend, in view of friendly disposition recently shown by Ameer towards Persia, that Eyoub Khan should be prevented by every means short of actual force from leaving Tehran pending duration of the Shah's journey to Meshed. Shah's son, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Commerce, have each ineffectually endeavoured to dissuade him from going, and Minister of Commerce has been ordered to threaten forced detention should he attempt to leave. He seems, however, to have understood force will not be employed, and he now declares his intention of going to Bokhara by way of Asterabad, or through some part of Geok-Tépé.

Strong aversion of Shah and Persian Ministers to do anything that might provoke resistance on the part of Eyoub's followers makes it very doubtful if effectual

* ? miles.

measures will be taken to detain him here, and Ameer would do well to take all precautions on the Herat and Turkestan frontiers.

No. 108.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 11.)

My Lord, *Tehran, May* 21, 1883.

EYOUB KHAN having lately given out amongst his followers here and in Meshed that he had obtained permission to accompany the Shah on his approaching journey to Khorassan, I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and received from his Excellency assurances that he would not, under any circumstances, be allowed to go to Meshed or to enter the Province of Khorassan. Eyoub Khan has, however, continued to make preparations which indicate an intention on his part to quit Tehran. I have now ascertained from one of his followers, who is in his confidence, that he has applied to the Persian Government for permission to leave Tehran, and that he is determined to leave whether the Shah gives him permission to do so or not. He intends to proceed to Resht, I am told, and to make his way thence to Bokhara, or possibly through the Turkoman country to the frontiers of Turkestan, with the object of fomenting disturbances at Meimaneh.

It has been reported that Eyoub Khan had been in communication with the Vali of Meimaneh, and that it was believed he had promised to assist that Chief in his defiance of the Ameer. I learn from a very trustworthy source that Eyoub Khan has lately expressed great confidence in his ability to bring about a general revolt against Abdul Rahman Khan throughout Turkestan should he succeed in reaching Meimaneh or the immediate neighbourhood of that place.

With this object in view, he has been endeavouring to persuade the son of the late Shah Newaz Khan, of Herat, to proceed with him to the Turkestan frontier, hoping that the outbreak of hostilities at Meimaneh will enable his numerous partisans in Herat, aided by the Shah Newaz Khan party there, to induce the Herat population to join his cause.

Mahomed Shereef Khan has also written recently from Bagdad to his friends in Meshed that he is about to come to Tehran and will shortly reach Khorassan. His presence there would probably be followed by intrigues which would favour Eyoub Khan's designs on the Afghan territory. I have thought it right, therefore, in view of the circumstances above mentioned, to urge the Persian Government to take steps to prevent the departure of Eyoub Khan from Tehran and the passage of Shereef Khan through the Persian territory to Khorassan.

I desired Mr. Dickson accordingly to make a verbal communication to Mirza Saïd Khan with this object, and I have now the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, a copy of his Report, from which it will be seen that the Shah has ordered steps to be taken by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in accordance with my request.

I have, &c
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Mr. Dickson to Mr. Thomson.

(Extract.) *Tehran, May* 18, 1883.

BY appointment I waited upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon, at the house of the Minister of Telegraphs, whom the Shah was honouring with a visit.

I told Mirza Saïd Khan that your Excellency had heard that Eyoub Khan was making preparations to quit Tehran, and that he intended proceeding towards Turkestan, either by Khorassan or by Resht across the Caspian; that Shereef Khan also, probably in combination with this movement, contemplated leaving Bagdad for Khorassan; and that you were anxious that steps should be taken to prevent their doing so, as their object was no doubt to create mischief against the Ruler of Afghanistan.

Mirza Saïd Khan said that some difficulty was felt by the Persian Government as to how they should deal with Eyoub Khan, who was not a prisoner but their guest;

that he was greatly influenced by one of his Sirdars, who was constantly filling his mind with ambitious ideas; that advice had frequently been given to both to remain quietly at Tehran; that as yet there was nothing to show that this advice was disregarded; but that if they disappeared it would be in opposition to the advice and without the knowledge of the Persian Government.

I observed to his Excellency that if Eyoub were permitted to return to the neighbourhood of that country and create disturbances, Abderrahman Khan might find himself forced to apply to the British Government for assistance, a contingency which it was very desirable to avoid. The Persian Minister expressed his entire concurrence in this view. Therefore, I added, his Excellency might give some sound advice in this sense; that he was still very young and had many years to look forward to; that his detention here was at present a political necessity, and that his wisest course would be to respect the wishes of the Shah and of Her Majesty's Government in the matter. The Minister approved these remarks.

I then told him that your Excellency would feel obliged to him if he would telegraph to the Persian Consul-General at Bagdad to prevent the departure of Shereef Khan. He replied that he would take the Shah's orders on the subject.

No. 109.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 13, 3·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, June 13, 1883.*

SHAH left yesterday for Meshed, accompanied by about 1,500 infantry and 2,000 irregular cavalry.

No. 110.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 19, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract by Mr. Michell from the "Novoe Vremyia" respecting a new Russian expedition for the exploration of Central Asia and of a certain portion of Thibet.

The St. Petersburgh "Vedomosti" also speaks of other expeditions of a similar nature in that region

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 110.

Abstract of Article in the "Novoe Vremyia" of $\frac{\text{May 28}}{\text{June 9}}$, 1883.

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the $\frac{\text{28th May}}{\text{9th June}}$, 1883, states that a fourth scientific expedition to explore Central Asia, and an area of 20,000 square geographical miles in Thibet, has been organized with the consent of His Imperial Majesty. Colonel Prjevalsky is to take command of the expedition, and he will be accompanied by two officers, one volunteer, one interpreter, and an escort of Transbaikal Cossacks. The sum of 16,080 silver roubles has been assigned for this expedition.

The St. Petersburgh "Vedomosti" announces that the Oxus expedition for surveying the western half of the Uzboi (ancient channel of the Oxus) left Bala-Tshem on the $\frac{\text{26th March}}{\text{7th April}}$. M. Lessar's expedition for exploring the Tchardjui bed of the Oxus, the central parts of the Kara-Kum desert, and the roads between Askabad and Bokhara, left Kizil-Arvat on the $\frac{\text{6th}}{\text{18th}}$ April last.

Major-General Grodekoff has been appointed Military Governor of the Syr-Darian region and Commander of the troops stationed therein.

No. 111.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received July 5.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, June* 10, 1883.

WITH reference to the telegrams which I have lately addressed to your Lordship relative to Sirdar Eyoub Khan's proceedings, I have now the honour to report that having received information some time ago that the Afghan refugees residing here were making preparations to leave Tehran, I brought the matter to the notice of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. His Excellency had no knowledge of the circumstance, and having referred to the police authorities, he learned from them that they had not heard of any intended movement on the part of the Afghans. I alluded to the subject again a few days later, and recommended Mirza Saïd Khan to see that measures were taken to prevent Eyoub Khan from leaving clandestinely. It was then ascertained that he and his followers had purchased horses and made other arrangements which would enable them to quit Tehran at a few hours' notice.

I heard soon afterwards through one of his confidential friends that Eyoub Khan had written to the Shah for permission to leave Persia, and that he intended to proceed to Bokhara by way of the Caspian. I therefore sent an urgent verbal communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to induce the Persian Government to detain him in Tehran, and I received from the Shah, as reported in my despatch of the 21st ultimo, an assurance that steps would be taken with that object.

Further formal assurances were subsequently given to me by His Majesty, that every precaution would be taken to prevent Eyoub Khan from leaving Tehran.

It was found, however, that Eyoub Khan had no idea of consulting the wishes of the Persian Government in the matter, and that he was resolved to quit Persia with or without the Shah's permission. On two occasions when he saw the Foreign Minister he intimated that this was his determination, and to other Persian officials he adopted a still more defiant tone, saying that he was neither a prisoner nor a criminal in this country, and that if the Shah was resolved to keep him in Tehran, he would have to do so by force and no longer as a guest, but as a prisoner. This language made an impression upon the Shah and his Ministers, and a Council having been summoned to consider the question, it was decided that it would bring great discredit upon the Persian Government, and upon the Shah personally, if force were used towards a person in Eyoub Khan's position, as it might provoke resistance on the part of his followers and lead to bloodshed. The Council, therefore, recommended that he should be prevented by every means short of force from leaving Tehran, but that if he could not be induced by argument to remain, he should be allowed to go.

This course was decided upon, and several ineffectual attempts having been made to induce him to alter his plans, Eyoub Khan then wrote to the Shah thanking His Majesty for past favours, and saying that he now proposed to quit the Persian territory, and to proceed with his family either to Askabad by way of Khorassan or from one of the northern districts of that province across the Turkoman country to Bokhara.

Eyoub Khan's departure from Tehran, with the avowed object of creating disturbances in the Afghan territory, appearing to be thus certain, I called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and afterwards upon three of the other Ministers who had been consulted by the Shah on the question of Eyoub Khan's detention, and discussed the matter with each of them separately. I recapitulated what had been already said as to the complications which might ensue if Eyoub now succeeded in entering Afghanistan at Meimaneh or elsewhere, and pointed to the obligation which rested upon Persia to prevent any such movement being made from her territory. I said that there was in reality very little difference between Eyoub Khan's being allowed to direct an attack on the Herat frontier from Khorassan and his being permitted to go from Persia through the Turkoman country, to stir up revolt on the frontiers of Turkestan; and as for the plea that the Shah could not compel him to reside in Persia against his will, I observed that it was an argument that might be used if he intended to withdraw from this country and reside peaceably at some point, like Bagdad for instance, remote from the Afghan frontier; but that every one knew what Eyoub Khan's designs now were, and he himself made no secret of its being his intention to proceed through Khorassan if possible, or by the nearest route open to him, to foment disturbances in the territory of the Ameer, who was at peace and on friendly terms with the Shah's Government, and that it appeared to me under the circumstances that the Persian Government would not only be perfectly justified, but that it

was incumbent upon them to prevent, by force if necessary, his carrying out this project. I added that Eyoub Khan had already given out to his followers in Meshed, and to others, that he had the Shah's permission to accompany the Royal camp to Khorassan, and that his designs were viewed favourably by the Persian Government. If he was allowed to proceed towards the Afghan frontier now, it would be believed by many that such was the case. Exaggerated reports would reach the frontier as to the number of troops in the Shah's camp, and the object of His Majesty's journey, and many who were now disposed to yield obedience to Abdurrahman Khan, might be led to take part with Eyoub Khan. I said that I thought it was, therefore, most undesirable in all respects that he should be permitted to quit Tehran at the present moment. My remarks seemed to make some impression on those to whom they were addressed, and especially on the Nasseer-ed-Dowleh, who promised to support my representations on the subject when they were submitted to the Shah.

The question was again discussed by the Shah and his Ministers next morning, and the Nasseer-ed-Dowleh was ordered to see Eyoub Khan, and inform him that the Persian Government had decided that his detention here during the Shah's absence in Khorassan was absolutely necessary.

No. 112.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 6, 1883.

I ASKED the Persian Minister this afternoon whether there was any truth in the Reuter's telegram which had appeared in the papers two days ago, stating that a Treaty had been concluded between Persia and Russia in regard to the north-eastern frontier of Persia as far as Afghanistan.

Malcom Khan answered that he had no information on the subject, but that he thought the report must refer to the Treaty of last year, of which I already had cognizance.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 113.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July* 17, 1883, 4·30 P.M.

UNDER date of 11th, Reuter's correspondent at Tehran telegraphs that preliminary Convention drawn up by Russian Minister at Tehran, and provisionally accepted by Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, extends Russian frontier to midway between Sarakhs and Merv, and stipulates that in event of England protesting, Persia should refer Her Majesty's Government to Russia.

Have you any fresh information regarding this matter?

No. 114.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received July 19, 3·10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, July* 19, 1883, 2·40 P.M.

INFORMATION communicated by Reuter's correspondent is, I believe, premature. Minister for Foreign Affairs vouches for truth of the statement which he has repeatedly made that no Convention has yet been proposed or demands put forward relative to the extension of the Russian frontier.

No. 115.

Mr. Finn to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 18.)

My Lord, *Resht, July* 24, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival here, on his way to Tehran, of M. Pokhitanow, formerly attached to the Russian Legation in Persia, who has been recently on leave of absence in Russia. This gentleman is now Secretary to Lieutenant-Colonel Kouzmin-Karavaieff, the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Perso-Akhal frontier.

The latter gentleman will himself pass through here in a few days on his way to Tehran; thence, having received his final instructions from his Legation, he proposes proceeding to Astrabad, where the labours of the Commission will be opened.

I am informed that the Russian Commissioner has been specially instructed to see that an equitable division of the water supply is made along the frontier line.

M. Pokhitanow was specially attached to the suite of the Iz-ed-Dowleh during His Royal Highness' late visit to Russia for the coronation of the Emperor.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ALEXANDER FINN.

No. 116.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(*Received August* 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, extract from a letter from the Viceroy of India to His Highness the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 16th June, 1883, on the subject of the northern boundaries of Afghanistan.

India Office, August 17, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 116.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

(After compliments.) *Simla, June* 16, 1883.

YOUR Highness expresses a wish to be supplied with a document and map, showing the boundaries between Afghanistan and Russia and Persia.

The boundaries of Afghanistan were settled by the British Government with Russia in 1873, when the Afghan territory between the Oxus to the Heri-Rud was defined as follows:—

"This internal districts of Akcha, Sir-i-Pul, Maimena, Shibergan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans."

This boundary has, however, never been laid down accurately on any map, and the country has not been examined on the spot with that view. No map, therefore, which could be sent to your Highness would show this line of frontier correctly; but I should be glad to be informed what districts your Highness understands to be described by the words above quoted, and exactly what you consider to be the boundary defined by them.

No. 117.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(*Received August* 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a letter from the Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 16th June, 1883, intimating the grant to His Highness of an annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees.

India Office, August 17, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 117.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

(After compliments.) *Simla, June* 16, 1883.

YOUR Highness will remember that, at Sir Lepel Griffin's interview with you at Zimma on the 31st July, 1880, he said that the Government of India could only start your Administration by giving you a grant to pay your army and officials and your immediate expenses; and that, having recognized you as Ameer, it was anxious to see you strong; but after you had taken possession of Cabul, you must rely on your own resources.

I have always interested myself so much in your Highness' success, and have felt so great a desire for the establishment of a strong and friendly Power under your Highness' auspices in Afghanistan, that I have on various occasions gone beyond the determination then communicated to you, and have from time to time aided your Highness with sums of money and arms, besides devoting some lakhs a-year to the support of Afghan refugees and detenus, whose presence in Afghanistan is, I understand, regarded by your Highness as dangerous to your power. Still my view of the relations to each other of the two countries has throughout been that, in matters of internal policy and finance, India should not seek to interfere with Afghanistan, but should confine herself to the part of a friendly neighbour and ally. On these conditions, it would be in accordance with the practice of nations that Afghanistan should regulate her own finance and bear her own burdens, as she has always done heretofore.

As regards matters of external policy, your Highness was informed in the communication from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 20th July, 1880, and again in my letter of the 22nd February, 1883, that if any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as might appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it; provided that your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations.

On consideration, however, of your accounts of the condition of your north-west frontier, I have been satisfied that your Highness has to contend with exceptional difficulties in that quarter. I have understood that, owing to various untoward circumstances, your Highness has not yet been able to reduce the important frontier province of Herat to the orderly and secure condition so essential for the protection of Afghanistan as a whole; and therefore that, for the settlement of the affairs of that frontier, some friendly assistance may be needful to you. I further observe, with satisfaction, your Highness' assurances of good faith and loyalty to the British Government; and your Highness' language convinces me that you realize how much it is to the interest of Afghanistan to maintain friendly relations with the Government of India.

Impressed by these considerations, I have determined to offer to your Highness personally, as an aid towards meeting the present difficulties in the management of your State, a subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees a-year, payable monthly, to be devoted to the payment of your troops, and to the other measures required for the defence of your north-western frontier. I feel that I may safely trust to your Highness' good faith and practised skill to devote this addition to your resources to objects of such vital importance as those which I have above mentioned.

No. 118.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 30.)

My Lord, *Tehran, July* 24, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Russian Minister had an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 15th instant, at which, by desire of the Shah, the question of the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans, occupying the Hussein Kuli encampment at the mouth of the Attrek, was again discussed.

Persia's claims in respect to Hussein Kuli and the tribe in question have been reserved for investigation by the Commissioners who will shortly visit that part of the

frontier; and the matter would not now have come under consideration were it not for the demand recently made by the Russian authorities for the payment to them of taxes by the Oghurjele tribe. A similar demand was formerly made, but withdrawn on objection being raised by the Persian Government.

It appears that the Turkoman Chiefs who lately visited the Shah's camp in the neighbourhood of Astrabad complained that the tax had been reimposed, and orders were sent by His Majesty to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to endeavour to make arrangements with the Russian Minister that his Government should relinquish all claims of this nature pending a final decision of the question by the Frontier Commission.

M. Melnikoff has telegraphed to St. Petersburgh on the subject, and has informed Mirza Saeed Khan that he anticipates no difficulty in obtaining orders for the exaction being discontinued for the present.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 119.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

My Lord, *Tehran, July 26, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Colonel Karavaieff, an officer who was on General Skobeleff's staff at Geuk-Tépé, and afterwards assisted M. Zinoview in negotiating the Akhal-Khorassan boundary questions, has been appointed Commissioner for making out the line of frontier agreed to in Article II of the Russo-Persian Treaty of December 1881.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has been informed by the Russian Minister that Colonel Karavaieff will reach Tehran in a few days, and the Persian Commissioner, who was appointed eighteen months ago, is ready to proceed to the frontier whenever his Russian colleague arrives. The work of the Commission will then commence at the mouth of the Atrek, where the Persian claim to the Turkoman Settlement at Hussein Koolee will be investigated and disposed of.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 120.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, August 4, 1883.*

I HAD a conversation with the Russian Minister some evenings ago with reference to affairs in Khorassan. He alluded to General Komaroff's visit to the Shah's camp, and said that, having been misinformed as to the date of the Shah's arrival on the frontier, the General had left Askabad much too soon. On reaching Kuchan, he had found that His Majesty was not expected there for another ten days. Instead of waiting at that place he had thought it better to move on to Boojnoord, where he arrived on the 25th July. He was received by the Shah immediately on his arrival, and on the following day, at the Shah's request, his Cossack escort had manœuvred with the Persian Cossacks in His Majesty's presence. He was to leave the camp immediately, and had probably returned to Akhal by this time.

In his conversation, M. Melnikoff expressed views similar to those lately put forward at St. Petersburgh by his predecessor, M. Zinoview, as to the advisability of an Agreement being now concluded between England and Russia with respect to that part of the Afghan frontier which has not yet been defined. He referred to the arrangement come to between the two Governments recognizing the boundary line between Afghanistan and Bokhara, and said that, since that Agreement was made, no difficulties or complaints had arisen on either side, the Shir Ali Khan incident excepted, and he thought an equally good result would be obtained, and an important element of discord removed, if the demarkation of the Afghan line of frontier from Khojeh Saleh to the Heri-Rud were agreed upon and speedily effected.

No. 121.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received September 1.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a letter from the Ameer of Cabul to his Excellency the Viceroy of India, dated the 11th July, 1883, in acknowledgment of the grant to him of annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees.

India Office, August 30, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 121.

The Ameer of Afghanistan to the Viceroy of India.

(Translation.)

(After compliments.) 6*th Ramazan*, 1300 *H.* (*July* 11, 1883).

I HAVE perused your Excellency's two friendly and cordial letters, dated the 16th June, 1883, corresponding to the 10th Shaban, 1300 H., which reached me at Jelalabad. ' My heart, the repository of concord, was exceedingly gratified and rejoiced by the glad tiding of your Excellency's perfect and sound health.

In one of the friendly epistles an allusion was made to Mr. (Sir Lepel) Griffin's interview with me at Zimma, and to the sympathy and commiseration shown by the illustrious British Government from time to time to me and to the people of Afghanistan. It also contained the observation :—

" My view (of the relations of the two countries to each other) has throughout been that in matters of internal policy and finance India should not seek to interfere with Afghanistan, but should confine herself to the part of a friendly neighbour and ally. I have determined to offer to your Highness personally, as an aid towards meeting the present difficulties in the management of your State, a subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees a-year, payable monthly."

In the other cordial letter your Excellency, referring to the definition of the internal districts and to the settlement of the boundaries of Afghanistan through the British Government with Russia in 1873, wrote thus :—

" The internal districts of Akcha, Sar-i-Pul, Maimana, Shibarghan, and Andkhoi, the latter of which will be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans."

I have read both the letters and made myself fully acquainted with their contents, and have been exceedingly pleased and satisfied at the manifold favours shown to me by the illustrious British Government. I have announced the glad tidings of your Excellency's determination, which is calculated to conduce to the well-being of the British Government and of the people of Afghanistan, and to put in order and keep going my affairs to the people of Afghanistan at large, who all offered up thanks, saying : " For many years we, the Afghan nation, have been suffering from innumerable calamities. Thanks be to God that a glorious Government like this (British Government) has befriended us."

God willing, the people of Afghanistan will never allow their heads to swerve from the line of friendship to the illustrious British Government, and so long as I live I will not think of making friends with any one but with the illustrious British Government. I have offered my prayers to God for the (increased) glory of that powerful Government.

I have understood what my northern boundaries are, but I wished and am still wishing to get hold of a map to enable me to have a thorough knowledge of Afghanistan, so that I may know the exact limit (point) up to which I should direct my attention, and that I may endeavour to watch my frontiers properly, and improve my possessions. I have written to the Governor of Balkh to send me a statement, showing the boundaries of his province, viz., every village and hamlet on the border, whether it be Andkhoi or Balkh, so that I may send it for your Excellency's information. I have also written to the Governor of Badakshan to furnish me with a similar statement of the boundaries of Badakshan and Kataghan, viz., every village and hamlet, so that I may forward it also to your Excellency.

Further, I have always prayed and I pray for your Excellency's health and prosperity.

No. 122.

Earl Granville to Mr. Kennedy.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 1, 1883.

IN reply to a representation made by Sir E. Thornton to the Russian Government respecting the conduct of a Russian officer towards Mr. Stephen near Chacha, M. de Giers stated, in a note dated the 4th March, that he was in ignorance of the circumstances, but that he had caused inquiries to be made.

The result of these inquiries has not been communicated to Her Majesty's Government, and I have to instruct you to remind M. de Giers that they have not yet heard from him on the subject.

The officer was, in the first instance, described as Major Knoss, but it appears that this was not his real name, and that "Knoss" was a Turkoman corruption of the Russian title "Kniaz."

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 123.

Memorandum by Mr. Stephen.

I THINK it well to draw attention to the position of Sarakhs as plotted in latest Russian Map of the Transcaspian Province (1875. Corrected up to the 24th March, 1883).

Its position in this Map is latitude 37° 4′, while my survey of the Heri-Rud, based on bearings, taken from Mohsinabad, of Kehriz and Kohsan (two points astronomically fixed by Lentz), and checked by three sextant observations for latitude taken by me between the Herat frontier and Sarakhs, would place the latter spot at 36° 23′ 30″.

(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

September 5, 1883.

No. 124.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 7, 9 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, September* 7, 1883.

THE Shah has quitted Meshed and proceeded by the direct road to Tehran.

No. 125.

Vice-Consul Finn to Earl Granville.—(Received September 8.)

My Lord, *Resht, August* 6, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to report the passage through Resht, on his way to the capital, of the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan frontier, referred to in my despatch to your Lordship of the 24th ultimo.

Colonel Kouzmin-Karavaieff, who is accompanied by Captain Count Nirod, of the Imperial Guard, informs me that he expects to be detained at Tehran until the return of the Shah from Khorassan, some time in October, and that he will then proceed via Astrabad to Askabad, where he is to receive his final instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ALEXANDER FINN.

No. 126.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, September* 12, 1883, 4 P.M.

IN event of Eyoub Khan attempting to leave Tehran after the Shah's return from Meshed, remind Persian Government of danger of allowing him to quit Persian territory at a point whence he could make his way towards Herat or Valley of Murghab, or to settle at any place where he could with facility intrigue against Ameer's authority in western and north-western provinces of Afghanistan.

No. 127.

Earl Granville to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 18, 1883.

I INCLOSE, for any observations which you may have to offer upon it, copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to Her Majesty's Legation at Tehran, in which he points out that in the latest edition of the Russian Map of Transcaspia inclosed in Sir E. Thornton's despatch of the 21st June, Sarakhs is placed too far to the north.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 128.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 27.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, August* 28, 1883.

SINCE the arrival here of Colonel Karavaieff, the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan frontier, the Russian Minister has had three interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to determine how the work of the Commission is to be carried out.

M. Melnikoff has proposed that he and the Minister for Foreign Affairs should sign and exchange a document stipulating that the Commissioners shall have full power to settle on the spot all questions without further reference to their Governments; that only questions connected with the demarkation of the frontier shall be brought before the Commission; and, thirdly, that in the event of a divergence of opinion between the two Delegates, rendering it necessary that a reference should be made to St. Petersburgh and Tehran, the work of the Commission shall proceed pending such reference and the receipt of definite instructions from their respective Governments.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has referred to the Shah for instructions as to the acceptance of these conditions. His Excellency is disposed to acquiesce to them, provided that the question of the Hussein-Kuli settlement at the mouth of the Attrek, where the work of the Commission will commence, is decided before the delimitation of the frontier is proceeded with.

While engaged in marking out the line of the frontier on the basis agreed upon in Article I of the Treaty of December 1881, it is proposed that the Commissioners should investigate and decide the following questions:—

1. The true position of Hussein-Kuli. There are two channels by which the Attrek enters the Caspian. The Russians assert that Hussein-Kuli is on the north bank of the river, and that it therefore belongs to Russia; while the Persians maintain that the principal channel flows to the north of that settlement, and that it is therefore within the Persian territory. When the Commissioners leave Tehran their first duty will be to visit the embouchure of the Attrek, and determine on which side of the main channel Hussein-Kuli is situated.

2. The right of Persia to withdraw the Oghurjele tribe from Hussein-Kuli in the event of its being decided that the place belongs to Russia. The Oghurjele Turkomans residing at Hussein-Kuli number about 800 families. They claim to be Persian subjects, and pay taxes to the Governor of Astrabad. If the district which

* No. 123.

they occupy at present is transferred to Russia, the Persians claim the right to remove the tribe to another location within their own frontier.

3. The nationality of the Charvas, or nomad portion of the Persian Yemoots, who annually migrate to the summer pastures within the Russian territory north of the Attrek from their permanent quarters on the south or Persian bank of that river. The Persian Government contends that the Persian nationality of these Yemoots should not be affected by their temporary residence on Russian territory, and that they should, in this respect, be placed on the same footing as the Persian Shahseven tribes in Azerbaijan, who annually migrate during the winter months to the Moghan Plains in Russian territory. The Choornoors, or agricultural portion of the Yemoot tribes, who are more numerous than the Charvas, maintain permanent encampments on their own lands, and do not quit the Persian soil.

4. The recent occupation of the Russians, in spite of Persian remonstrances, of a portion of the district of Kelteh-Chinar, on the Akhal frontier. The frontier-line at Kelteh-Chinar has not yet been clearly defined. The Russians have, nevertheless, taken possession of the land in question, upon which the inhabitants depend for their supply of corn. The Persian Government remonstrated, and the Russians promised to remove the Cossack outpost which they had placed at that spot. This promise does not appear, however, to have been fulfilled, as the Shah found the guard still there when he recently visited that part of the frontier. The removal, pending the decision of the Akhal Commissioners as to the true line of boundary, is now demanded.

No. 129.

Prince Malcom Khan to Earl Granville.—(Received September 29.)

Mon cher Comte, *Londres, le 27 Septembre,* 1883.

LE Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique a soulevé à Téhéran une question délicate sur laquelle je crois nécessaire d'appeler particulièrement l'attention de votre Excellence.

Pendant le dernier voyage de Sa Majesté le Schah à Khorassan, Ayoub Khan a voulu quitter Téhéran pour aller à Bokhara. Le Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran, ayant fait des observations amicales contre l'opportunité de ce départ d'Ayoub Khan, le Gouvernement Persan, par pure considération pour les vues de la Légation Britannique, a employé tous ses moyens officieux à amener ce Prince Afghan à retarder son départ jusqu'au retour de Sa Majesté le Schah. Maintenant Ayoub Khan demande de nouveau à partir pour Bokhara, et Mr. Thomson de son côté fait des nouvelles instances pour que le Gouvernement Persan empêche ce Prince de quitter la Perse par voie de Khorassan.

Cette demande de Mr. Thomson est tout à fait contraire à tout ce que nous avons de plus sacré dans les règles de notre hospitalité Musulmane.

Ayoub Khan, un Prince presque Persan, déjà personnellement connu à la Cour de Téhéran, est venu librement, comme tant d'autres Chefs de sa famille, demander à Sa Majesté le Schah une hospitalité qu'aucun Souverain Oriental n'aurait pu lui refuser. Aujourd'hui ce Prince veut quitter la Perse pour aller à Bokhara et cela par la seule route directe qui conduit de Téhéran à cette capitale. Quel est le Ministre Musulman qui oserait accepter l'odieuse mission de détourner forcément un tel hôte de sa route naturelle?

Qu'Ayoub Khan quitte la Perse par telle voie ou par telle autre, cela nous est parfaitement indifférent; mais vouloir engager le Schah à faire subir à son hôte respecté un traitement qu'aucune loi internationale ne justifie, ce serait préparer pour Sa Majesté une humiliation d'autant plus amère qu'elle serait inutile, car, Ayoub Khan ne pouvant partir ostensiblement, partirait à l'insu de notre Gouvernement; et l'effet de sa présence à Bokhara serait, pour les intérets Britanniques, exactement le même. La violation de l'hospitalité qu'on aurait imposée au Gouvernement Persan n'aurait donc servi qu'à faire inutilement une blessure profonde à l'amour-propre d'un Souverain ami.

Je puis assurer votre Excellence que le Gouvernement du Schah entretient les meilleurs sentiments envers le Gouvernement actuel de l'Afghanistan; et il a tout intérêt à veiller à ce que rien ne vient troubler la tranquillité des frontières de Khorassan; il est donc parfaitement aisé de concilier, dans le cas actuel, les règles de l'hospitalité avec les devoirs d'un bon voisinage: Ayoub Khan serait libre de quitter la Perse par n'importe quelle route; seulement le Gouvernement Persan aurait

soin à ce qu'il ne se fixât pas sur aucun point de nos provinces limitrophes de l'Afghanistan.

Cet arrangement naturel sans aggraver les inconvénients qui s'attachent à la position personnelle d'Ayoub Khan, éviterait à Téhéran des longs tiraillements d'autant plus regrettables qu'ils seraient inutiles.

Si votre Excellence, par une juste appréciation de la position du Gouvernement du Schah, approuvait l'arrangement que je viens de proposer alors, je serais heureux de télégraphier, en ce sens, un mot de réponse qu'on attend à Téhéran.

Votre, &c.
(Signé) MALCOM.

(Translation.)

My dear Lord, *London, September* 27, 1883.

HER Britannic Majesty's Minister has raised a delicate question at Tehran, to which I think it necessary to call your Excellency's particular attention.

During the last journey of His Majesty the Shah to Khorassan, Eyoub Khan wished to quit Tehran in order to go to Bokhara. Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran having made friendly representations as to the inopportunity of Eyoub Khan's departure, the Persian Government, purely out of consideration for the wishes of the British Legation, employed all officious means at its disposal to persuade that Afghan Prince to delay his departure until the return of His Majesty the Shah. Now Eyoub Khan is again requesting that he may leave for Bokhara, and Mr. Thomson, on his side, is making fresh representations in order that the Persian Government may prevent the Afghan Prince from leaving Persia by way of Khorassan.

The demand of Mr. Thomson is altogether opposed to everything that we hold most sacred in our rules of Mussulman hospitality.

Eyoub Khan, a Prince almost Persian, already personally known to the Court of Tehran, came of his own accord, as so many other Chiefs of his family have done, to ask from His Majesty the Shah a hospitality which no oriental Sovereign could refuse him. Now this Prince wishes to leave Persia in order to go to Bokhara, and that by the only route which leads direct from Tehran to that capital. What Mussulman Minister would dare to accept the odious mission of forcibly causing such a guest to turn aside from his proper route ?

Whether Eyoub Khan leaves Persia by one route or another is a matter of perfect indifference to us; but to wish to bind the Shah to make his respected guest submit to treatment which no international law justifies would be to expose His Majesty to humiliation all the more bitter because it would be useless: for Eyoub Khan, not being able to leave openly, would depart without the knowledge of our Government; and the effect of his presence at Bokhara would be, as far as British interests are concerned, exactly the same. The violation of hospitality forced on the Persian Government would thus have only served uselessly to inflict a deep wound upon the feelings of a friendly Sovereign.

I can assure your Excellency that the Government of the Shah entertain the kindest feelings towards the present Government of Afghanistan, and they are in every way interested in taking care that nothing should disturb the tranquillity of the frontier of Khorassan; it is, therefore, perfectly easy in the present case to reconcile the rules of hospitality with the duties of a friendly neighbour. Eyoub Khan would be free to quit Persia by any route whatsoever; only the Persian Government would take care that he did not establish himself at any point of our provinces bordering on Afghanistan.

This natural arrangement, without aggravating the inconvenience attaching to Eyoub Khan's personal position, would avoid long struggles at Tehran all the more regrettable because of their useless character.

If your Excellency, justly appreciating the position of the Government of the Shah, should approve the arrangement proposed by me, I should be happy to telegraph in that sense the reply awaited at Tehran.

Yours, &c.
(Signed) MALCOM.

No. 130.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 1.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, September 27, 1883.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 18th instant, I have the honour to report that in a recent conversation with M. Zinovieff respecting maps of Central Asia, I mentioned the different position assigned to the town of Sarrakhs in two Russian maps belonging to Her Majesty's Embassy of 1877 and 1883, as pointed out by Mr. Stephen in his Memorandum forwarded to me in your Lordship's above-named despatch.

M. Zinovieff informed me that he was aware of the fact, but that he attached no importance to it, because Sarrakhs being a Persian fortress would always lie outside of any Russian line of frontier.

M. Zinovieff added that no correct maps of that region existed, but that the surveys actually in progress would rectify many errors.

No. 131.

*Earl Granville to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.**

Sir, *Foreign Office, October 2, 1883.*

A REPORT has reached Her Majesty's Government of an intended visit of a Russian to Cabul bearing a letter from the Emperor of Russia to the Ameer.

Such a proceeding on the part of the Russian Government would be inconsistent with the assurances which they have given to Her Majesty's Government from time to time on the subject of Afghanistan.

I have to instruct you to inquire as to the truth of this report, and to inform me of the result by telegraph.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 132.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, October 3.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 3, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to state that on receipt to-day of your Lordship's telegram of the 2nd instant I immediately waited on M. de Giers at the Foreign Department, and inquired of his Excellency whether there was any truth in a report which had reached Her Majesty's Government that a Russian intended to go to Cabul, furnished with a letter to the Ameer from the Emperor.

M. de Giers at once replied that such an event was impossible. The Emperor was most unlikely to give any letter addressed to the Ameer to any one. No such letter could be written without M. de Giers' knowledge, and he could positively and solemnly assure me that no such letter had been written by His Imperial Majesty.

M. de Giers further states that so anxious were the Emperor and himself to avoid all suspicion of Russian communication with Afghanistan that strict orders had been sent to the Governor-General of Turkestan to desist from the transmission of letters of ceremony or even of letters of recommendation to the Ameer in favour of travellers. In fact, all possible steps were taken to prevent intercourse between Russia and Afghanistan, which latter country was considered to be in England's "orbit."

In reply to a suggestion of mine, M. de Giers stated that no such letter could have been written during the Moscow Coronation festivities, at which period the Emperor had been most guarded in all his dealings with the various Asiatic potentates there assembled.

M. de Giers also promised to inform me at once whenever any intention existed of such an improbable event as the transmission of a letter from His Imperial Majesty to the Ruler of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, his Excellency observed that he was at a loss to account for the

* Substance telegraphed.

rumour which had reached Her Majesty's Government, and intimated that Russia had many Asiatic subjects, and that possibly some Persian or Turkoman might for his own purposes pretend to have been furnished with letters of recommendation to the Ameer by Russian authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 133.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 9, 1·40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October 9, 1883, 12·8 P.M.*

I HEAR that detachment of 1,200 Russian cavalry has gone from Akhal, by the Atek of Deregez, to the Tejend, where some earthworks have been thrown up, apparently for storing grain.

No. 134.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 7, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the "Novoe Vremyia" of this day states that, according to information it has received from Central Asia, Shugnan, a small and hitherto independent Bekdom, situated on the upper waters of the Oxus, has been occupied by the Afghans. In this manner, observes the above journal, that which Russia endeavoured to prevent has nevertheless been accomplished—the Russian and Afghan frontier has become conterminous in the Ferghana.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 135.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 15, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a note which I have received from M. de Giers, in reply to a note which I addressed to his Excellency on the 12th ultimo, in obedience to the instruction conveyed to me in your Lordship's despatch of the 1st ultimo, reminding his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government still awaited the result of the inquiries instituted by the Russian Government respecting the conduct of a Russian officer towards Mr. Condie Stephen near Chacha, on the Khorassan frontier.

In his above-mentioned note M. de Giers states that the Russian functionary who stopped Mr. Stephen was a non-commissioned militia officer named Marchani. I learn, however, that the officer in question bears the Georgian title of Prince Marchani, which would account for the Turkoman corruption "Knos" of the Russian word "Kniaz."

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

Inclosure in No. 135.

M. de Giers to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires, *St. Pétersbourg, le* $\frac{30 \text{ Septembre}}{12 \text{ Octobre}}$, 1883.

PAR votre note en date du $\frac{31 \text{ Août}}{12 \text{ Septembre}}$ vous avez bien voulu m'annoncer que le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères serait désireux de connaître les résultats des informations prises par le Ministère Impérial au sujet d'un conflit qui aurait eu lieu entre un fonctionnaire Russe et Mr. Condie Stephen, Secrétaire de

la Légation Britannique à Téhéran, et qui a fait l'objet de la note de Sir E. Thornton du $\frac{14}{26}$ Février dernier.

Des renseignements à ce sujet m'étant parvenus récemment de la part du Chef de la Province Transcaspienne, je suis en mesure de vous informer que le fonctionnaire Russe en question n'est autre qu'un nommé Marchani, Sous-Officier de la milice locale, employé par les autorités Transcaspiennes dans leurs rapports avec les Turcomans.

Ayant rencontré Mr. Stephen au moment où ce dernier se dirigeait vers Tchahtchah accompagné de Mirza Abbas Khan, Agent Britannique à Meshed, le susnommé Marchani fit observer à cet Agent qu'il l'engageait, lui, ainsi que son compagnon à ne point continuer leur voyage jusqu'à ce qu'il en eût référé au Chef de la province et reçu les ordres de ce dernier. Informé de cet incident le Lieutenant-Général Komarow s'empressa d'inviter le Sous-Officier Marchani à ne point s'opposer au voyage de Mr. Stephen, et le chargea même d'offrir au Secrétaire Anglais une escorte que ce dernier refusa pourtant d'accepter. Le Sieur Marchani prétend qu'il n'a même pas eu l'occasion de conférer directement avec Mr. Stephen, qu'il s'était borné à adresser des observations à Mirza Abbas Khan, et qu'il s'était bien gardé d'employer des termes de nature à blesser ces voyageurs.

En me faisant un devoir de vous faire part des informations ci-dessus exposées je me plais à espérer que M. le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères voudra bien reconnaître que l'incident qui a fait l'objet de la note de Sir E. Thornton ne saurait être attribué qu'à un malentendu, ainsi que je l'avais du reste prévu dans ma note responsive du 20 Février dernier.

Agréez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. le Chargé d'Affaires, *St. Petersburgh, September* 30 (*October* 12), 1883.

BY your note of the 31st August (12th September) you were good enough to inform me that Lord Granville was anxious to know the result of the inquiry made by the proper Department of the Imperial Government with regard to the dispute which is stated to have taken place between a Russian official and Mr. Condie Stephen, Secretary of the British Legation at Tehran, and which formed the subject of Sir E. Thornton's note of the 14th (26th) February last.

Information on this subject having lately reached me from the Governor of the Transcaspian province, I am enabled to inform you that the Russian official in question is a man of the name of Marchani, a non-commissioned officer in the local militia, and employed by the Transcaspian authorities in their relations with the Turkomans.

Having met Mr. Stephen at the moment when the latter gentleman was advancing towards Tchahtchah, accompanied by Mirza Abbas Khan, the British Agent at Meshed, the above-named Marchani invited that Agent, as well as his companion, not to continue their journey till he (Marchani) had referred the matter to the Governor of the province and received the Governor's orders. Lieutenant-General Komaroff, on being informed of this incident, hastened to instruct the non-commissioned officer Marchani not to oppose Mr. Stephen's journey, and even ordered him to offer the English Secretary an escort, which, however, the latter refused to accept. Marchani states that he had no opportunity of holding personal intercourse with Mr. Stephen; that he confined himself to addressing observations to Mirza Abbas Khan; and that he took every care to avoid employing any terms of a nature to offend the travellers.

I have thought it my duty to communicate the above facts to you, and I venture to express the hope that the Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will be good enough to acknowledge that the incident which formed the subject of Sir E. Thornton's note can only be attributed to a misunderstanding—as I had anticipated, moreover, in my reply of the 20th February last.

Accept, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 136.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 19, 1883.

HER Majesty's Government think it desirable that your Excellency should request information from the Russian Government as to the point on the Tejend to which it is proposed that the Russo-Persian line of boundary from Baba-Durmaz should be drawn. It would also seem expedient to obtain explanations as to the nature and extent of the claim of Russia to control the country to the east of that frontier-line.

This question has an obvious reference to the previous engagements between England and Russia with regard to the north-western frontier of Afghanistan.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 137.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 16, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch to your Lordship of the 7th October, I have the honour to report that the St. Petersburgh newspapers continue to comment upon the alleged occupation of the Begdom of Shugnan by the Afghans.

The St. Petersburgh "Vedomosti" of the 12th instant, referring to a telegram from Tashkend published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," remarks:—

"According to our information, Shugnan is situated between the Murgab and Hund Rivers, on the right bank of the Oxus. Between the Begdom of Shugnan and Kara Tigin there exists the Begdom of Roshan, beyond which is Darwaz. Kara Tigin certainly is conterminous with the Fergana region, but only to the mountains of Hon.

"In 1875-76 Russian troops occupied Karikul and the whole of the Hurgash Pamir to the passes of Uz-bel-su-Tink-an, as far as the River Paliz, which borders on Shugnan, and not on Bokhara territory.

"It is stated in the telegram from Tashkend that Yusuf Ali Beg had retired to the pass and begged us for an asylum, whereas, if Shugnan were conterminous with Kara Tigin, he could not have addressed such a request to us."

Another telegram, dated Tashkend, 13th instant, states that the Afghans have also occupied Wakhan, and that the Beg of that country has taken flight, accompanied by a large body of his subjects.

The Northern Telegraphic Agency supplies the following, dated Tashkend, the 15th instant:—

"Favourable news has been received here respecting the progress of the Pamir expedition. The travellers, Captain Putiata, the Mining Engineer, Ivanoff, and Bendersky, of the Corps of Topographers, visited Alichur and the Great Pamir without meeting a human being during twenty days; they then crossed the Murgab and entered Kara Tigin."

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 138.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 20, 4·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 20, 1883.

I AM desired by the Shah to inform Her Majesty's Government that Mir Masum Khan, the Persian Envoy lately sent to Afghanistan, has gone not as the Representative of His Majesty or the Persian Government, but solely as agent of the Prince-Governor of Khorassan, and that his mission has no political object whatever.

No. 139.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 21, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 21, 1883.

THE Persian Government has received information that the Russian force referred to in my telegram of 9th instant has returned to Askabad without proceeding to the Tejend.

Russian Minister confirms this intelligence, and informs me that the movement was intended to intimidate the Merv Turkomans, who have lately recommenced their raids.

No. 140.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 22, 1·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 22, 1883.

EYOUB KHAN has written to the Shah demanding permission to leave Tehran, and stating intention to join his family in Khorassan, and then quit Persian territory. At audience on the 20th His Majesty gave me an assurance that every effort would be made to prevent his entering Khorassan or approaching the Afghanistan frontier, but expressed doubt as to his compliance with the orders of the Persian Government. Minister of Commerce is now communicating with Eyoub Khan, and endeavouring to make an arrangement in accordance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government. If unsuccessful, the question of employing force, to which Shah is averse, will have to be decided. The Russian Minister has informed Persian Government that Eyoub Khan will not be allowed to proceed to Bokhara through Russian territory.

No. 141.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 24.)

My Lord, *Tehran, October* 1, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 28th August, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Minister for Foreign Affairs having now come to an understanding with the Russian Minister as to the manner in which the work of the Akhal Boundary Commission is to be carried out, it is proposed that the Commissioners shall commence operations on the frontier without further delay.

It has been agreed that the work of marking out the Akhal frontier shall be commenced from Baba-Durmaz, and not, as originally intended, from the Caspian Coast; and the Persian Commissioner, Suleiman Khan, has already left for Meshed, whence he will proceed to Askabad to meet his Russian colleague, Colonel Karavaieff, who is still here, but intends leaving in a few days, after the return of the Shah, for the Akhal frontier by way of Krasnavodsk and Kizil-Arvat.

By the arrangements now made the question whether the Hussein Kuli settlement at the mouth of the Atrek is situated on the Russian or Persian side of the main channel of that river, which was to have been the first point considered by the Commissioners, will be inquired into and decided when the demarcation of the rest of the Persian line of frontier has been completed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 142.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 23, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a Memorandum, drawn up by Mr. Michell, giving a précis of a Report read by the Russian Engineer, M. Lessar, at a meeting of a

Russian Geographical Society on the 18th instant, relative to his travels during 1882 in the countries bordering on the Transcaspian region.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

AT a meeting of the Russian Geographical Society, held on the $\frac{6}{18}$th October, 1883, M. Lessar gave an account of his travels during 1882 in the countries bordering on the Transcaspian region.

The following is a condensed account, as published in the Russian press, of the notes read by M. Lessar on the above occasion :—

"From Astrabad the traveller proceeded—viâ Megihed, Sarakhs, and Merv—to the Oxus, on the frontier of Bokhara. As the route lay through a country infested with robbers, a convoy of twenty Tekké horsemen was engaged. This number was amply sufficient, for the bands of robbers consist only of from five to ten men. If a vigilant watch is sustained no attack is made; it is only the unwary that are attacked. Caravans are also pillaged, and camels and horses driven off. The robbers are armed with old guns, pistols, daggers, &c., only fit for exhibition in a museum. Their horses are poor, unable to support more than twenty days' work, and succumb in two days if not supplied with water. When a friendly meeting takes place the robbers do not disguise their profession; they never attack their own tribesmen, and give trustworthy information respecting the route and watering-places. When flying from pursuit with booty they poison the water in the wells by throwing in dead bodies.

"When two bodies of horsemen meet in the Steppe measures of precaution are taken on both sides: arms are prepared, and men are sent out, who, from a distance, make inquiries with regard to their respective tribes, friends, &c. The Tekkés are not valorous, as they are said to be by the timorous Persians. The Tekkés are robbers, possessing predatory instincts; they are false, lying, idle, cowardly, selfish, and savagely merciless.

"After the fall of Geok-Tépé the country to the north from Askabad to Persia became tranquil, and raids almost ceased; but the Persians took advantage of the position of affairs. Out-posts of Persian troops were advanced, and under their cover the avidity of the Persian tax-collectors knew no bounds. The Tekkés frequently complained of the Persians to M. Lessar, but that traveller did not consider himself justified in listening to these appeals.

"The general character of the country is such as to render the construction of roads comparatively easy. The mountain passes are not steep, and the water supply is abundant. At one of the passes M. Lessar found an historical monument, the ladder of Nadir-Shah. It is cut out of the rock, and the steps are in a good state of preservation.

"In Merv and the vicinity there are 150,000 inhabitants. The poverty of the people forcibly strikes the eye. There is hardly any trade, the bazaar being open only twice a-week. The articles of trade are: green tea, khalats (robes), and coarse linen. The owner of 700 sheep is regarded as a wealthy man. The money in circulation is Russian, Persian, and local silver coins. Coins are made by any person who understands the process, and many are of a very low standard.

"In the year 1860 there was constructed near Merv a four-cornered fort of earth, armed with eight old useless guns. The Mervites are desirous of opening up relations with the Russians, and readily visit Askabad to purchase goods.

"No map accompanied M. Lessar's communication. He is said on good authority to be now compiling one on the basis of data obtained by him during his travels through the Transcaspian country, as also on the strength of recent surveys made by Russian military topographers. This map will be published in the month of December next."

St. Petersburgh, October $\frac{11}{23}$, 1883.

No. 143.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October* 24, 1883.

I HAD the honour to receive last night your Lordship's despatch of the 19th instant. I called upon M. de Giers this morning, and inquired of his Excellency, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, to what point on the River Tejend the line of boundary would be drawn.

M. de Giers replied that he was not prepared to give me an immediate answer to this question; that he had not yet examined it carefully; but that he would do so, and would have a further conversation with me on the subject.

His Excellency expressed his opinion that the Ateks did not extend so far south as Sarakhs. But he said that the Imperial Government were actually engaged, through their Representative at Tehran, in endeavouring to come to an arrangement as to what was to be considered the Ateks, and as to the boundary-line between Baba-Durmaz and Tejend.

In the course of the conversation, M. de Giers informed me that he had this morning received a telegram from the Russian Minister at Tehran, from which he had learnt that a very extensive raid had been made into Persia by the Turkomans, who had committed great havoc and carried off a deal of property. His Excellency added that His Majesty the Shah had earnestly begged that the Russian authorities would endeavour to procure the restitution of the spoils, and would take vigorous measures for the prevention of future raids. He said that the Persian troops were utterly unable to cope with the Turkomans, and did not dare to meet them. M. de Giers could not tell me the exact point at which this raid was made, for he had at once sent off the telegram to the Emperor, but he did not seem to be certain that the incursion of the hostile Turkomans was made from any part of the Ateks. He adduced the incident, however, as a proof of the utter inability of the Persian authorities to control the Turkoman tribes, wherever it might be.

I further inquired of M. de Giers, with reference to former engagements between England and Russia with regard to the north-western frontier of Afghanistan, what was the nature and extent of the control exercised by Russia to the east of the Tejend. His Excellency, in reply, disclaimed her having any direct control over that territory; indeed, he refused to admit the word control, although he acknowledged that General Tchernaieff had employed a certain moral influence in the interest of peace. He said that the different Turkoman tribes at Merv were constantly quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and that the General had recommended them to submit to the authority of the Khan of Khiva; the greater part of them had consequently consented to be governed by the person named by the Khan. But his Excellency insisted that this was the extent of Russian intervention, the result of which had been, he maintained, comparative tranquillity in that region.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 144.

Prince Malcom Khan to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 31.)

Mon cher Lord Granville, *Londres, le* 29 *Octobre,* 1883.

J'AI reçu de Tehran télégrammes sur télégrammes m'informant que les violentes persistances d'Ayoub Khan, de vouloir partir pour Bokhara, sont sur le point de faire naître des incidents fort fâcheux pour le Gouvernement du Schah. Et comme Sa Majesté, malgré tout son désir d'appuyer, dans cette circonstance, les vues du Gouvernement Anglais, se trouve dans l'impossibilité de retenir par force ce Prince Afghan, le Gouvernement Persan a décidé de le laisser quitter la Perse, sans plus de delai, pour aller où il voudrait.

Je puis ajouter cependant, que le Gouvernement du Schah se conformant aux règles de bon voisinage, aura soin à ce que Ayoub Khan en traversant nos provinces, ne puisse se fixer sur aucun point du territoire Persan limitrophe de l'Afghanistan.

Votre tout dévoué,

(Signé) MALCOM.

(Translation.)

My dear Lord Granville, *London, October* 29, 1883.

I HAVE received telegram after telegram from Tehran, informing me that the violent persistence of Eyoub Khan in his wish to depart for Bokhara is on the point of giving rise to incidents of a very unpleasant nature for the Government of the Shah; and as His Majesty, in spite of every desire on his part to support the wishes of the English Government in this matter, finds it impossible to forcibly detain this Afghan Prince, the Persian Government has decided to permit him to quit Persia without further delay, and to go wherever he may desire.

I may add, however, that the Government of the Shah, in conformity with the customs in force between neighbouring and friendly nations, will take care that Eyoub Khan, in his passage through our provinces, does not remain at any point of the Persian territory bordering on Afghanistan.

Yours, &c.
(Signed) MALCOM.

No. 145.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 2, 9·40 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 2, 1883.

MALCOM KHAN telegraphs that he anticipates no objection to Eyoub Khan's departure through Khorassan, if he is not allowed to linger on Persian territory near Afghan border. He states that he has written in this sense to your Lordship. Shah wished to act at once on this suggestion, but I have recommended His Majesty to await result of a further reference to Her Majesty's Government through the Persian Envoy.

Eyoub's object is to reach Maymene frontier by way of Sarakhs.

No. 146.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 5.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 1, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 24th ultimo, I yesterday inquired of M. de Giers whether he could give me any further details with regard to the proposed line of boundary from Baba-Durmaz to the Tejend.

His Excellency replied that he had been making inquiries upon the subject of M. Zinovieff, who was well acquainted with the matter, and that he had ascertained that the negotiations upon it were not so far advanced as he had supposed, and that, in fact, there had been no official negotiation at all at Tehran; for the preliminary surveys which were necessary before the question could be discussed between the two Governments had not yet been completed, owing to the Russian officers who had been detailed to make the surveys not having arrived in time to complete them during this season, and that, consequently, they would not be ready till next spring or summer.

In the meantime, and until this work should be completed, it would be impossible to decide what direction the proposed boundary should take.

As to the control exercised by Russia over the country to the east of the Tejend, M. de Giers repeated that the control was not direct, and that it was no more than a certain influence which the Russian authorities had acquired in that region, and which was employed by them in endeavouring to persuade the different tribes to refrain from hostilities among themselves, and from making incursions and preying upon their neighbours.

M. de Giers again alluded to the hostile incursion which had been recently made into Persian territory, but seemed to have very vague ideas as to the locality at which it had taken place. He stated, however, that it was made, not by Turkomans, but by Mervites, and that these had carried off as much as 50,000 animals, between cattle and sheep.

Upon my inquiring at what point on the Tejend these marauders had crossed into Persian territory, he replied that they had not crossed that river at all, but that the raid was made into Khorassan. In compliance, however, with the request of the

Shah, instructions had been sent to the Russian authorities to endeavour to induce the raiders to restore the property of which they had taken possession.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 147.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 6, 1883.

THE Persian Minister called here on the 2nd instant, and said that he wished to confirm verbally what he had already communicated to me by letter, viz., that, although the Persian Government could no longer forbid the departure of Eyoub Khan, they would take care that he should not stop on the Afghan frontier, or be allowed to use Persian territory as a basis for intrigue in Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 148.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 12, 3·20 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 12, 1883, 12·3 P.M.

RESULT of the information obtainable here is that no formal Agreement exists respecting boundary beyond Baba Durmaz.

Merv Turkomans have recently recommenced raids; last month a serious incursion was made on Kelat, forty prisoners and large herds being carried off. Prince-Governor proceeded with small force from Meshed to that part of the frontier.

No. 149.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 12, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of a condensed Report of M. Lessar's last journey through the Ateks to Sarakhs and thence to Merv. The original of this account is published in the "Novoe Vremyia" of the 5th instant, and is stated to have been compiled from M. Lessar's diary. It is announced that a second part of this account will shortly appear in the same newspaper.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 149.

"THROUGH PERSIA TO MERV."*

(Translation from the Russian.)

Lessar's New Journey: Kelat, Dereghez, and Badkhyz.

LAST year we communicated to our readers the details of two journeys performed by M. Lessar towards the end of 1881 and in the month of April 1882. In these two journeys M. Lessar explored the country of the Atek, as far as Sarakhs, *i.e.*, the continuation of our newly-acquired Akhal-Téké territory, as also the adjoining Persian province; from Sarakhs he proceeded southwards along the Heri-rud River to Western Afghanistan. Advancing in this direction to within 40 versts of Herat he returned by way of Gorian through Persia to Askabad. Finding that the information obtained on these journeys was incomplete, the indefatigable traveller determined to traverse the same ground again in the months of August and September 1882. The country known under the name of the Badkhyz, between the Murgab and Heri-rud, had, up to that time, been completely unexplored.

* The present account of M. Lessar's last journey was published by the "Novoe Vremyia" of October 24 (November 5), 1883, and is a compilation made by that newspaper direct from M. Lessar's diary.—J. M.

In 1841-42 Shakespeare and Conolly, when respectively proceeding from Herat to Merv, advanced along the course of the Murgab. Later, in 1870-80, Petrusevitch travelled from Sarakhs to Khosan along the northern portion of the Heri-rud River and beyond through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam. Nothing was known, however, about Badkhyz. With the object of exploring this territory M. Lessar started on the 3rd (15th) August last year, with an interpreter and a convoy of ten Turkomans, chosen from the militia of the conquered portion of the Turkoman country. On this occasion, instead of adopting the route already traversed by him to Sarakhs and thence through the Atek, M. Lessar chose the more circuitous road through Dereghez, Kelat, and Meshed, for the purpose of making himself acquainted with the water system of these Khanates as connected with the irrigation of the Atek.

All the rivers whose waters irrigate the fields of the Atek settlements take their rise in, and chiefly flow through, the Dereghez and Kelat Khanates. In consequence of this the various Turkoman tribes inhabiting the Atek were always, in the matter of their crops, dependent on the Persian rulers on their borders. Previous to the conquest of the Akhal-Téké country by Russia, this dependence was not much felt. The Khans exacted for the water, which the Atek inhabitants always got in abundance, one-tenth of all the crops, and, moreover, their frontiers were gratuitously guarded against the inroads of Akhal and Merv robbers by a chain of outlying Turkoman settlements. This was very important, considering that the reported inaccessibility of Kelat proves true only as regards the valley of the Chardé (between the Arghoon Shah and Naphthé mountain passes).

After the capture of Geok-Tépé the mutual relations changed. The Persian Rulers no longer stood in need of a defensive cordon of settlements, while the inhabitants find it no longer necessary to cluster for protection in the vicinity of forts. They were free to extend their fields, and the question of water supply at once gained great importance, particularly as a tax on water is, according to Mahommedan usage, considered illegal.

Travelling from west to east, M. Lessar carefully collected information respecting the irrigating capabilities of the Rivers Duranger, Kozgan-Su or Rudbar, Lain; the Rivulets Neu-Rek and Dekche-Su, and the Rivers Dushah or Chardé (the largest stream along the northern slope of the Hassar-Mesjid Mountains); the Mehneh Khour or Chacha-Su. M. Lessar finds that all these streams would abundantly supply the whole of the population with water, provided some order were established for its distribution.* In exceptional years the water supply is insufficient for all; but this could be easily avoided by establishing a strict control over the canals. Owing, however, to the enmity that exists between the inhabitants who belong to different tribes, each village has water courses of its own, to the injury of itself and its neighbours, and sometimes the inhabitants of one settlement forcibly divert the water of their neighbours to their own use. Besides this, the position of the population of the Atek is a miserable one, owing to the arbitrary conduct of the semi-independent Persian Rulers on the frontiers, who are not much amenable to the control of the central authorities, and do nearly what they please. It is very likely that these settlers will at no distant day revenge themselves cruelly on their oppressors.

From Askabad M. Lessar proceeded to Meshed through Kelate-Chinar, Mahomedabad, Kozgan, Kiabad-Giunbut, and across the Hezar-Mesjid Mountains, between the villages Kardé and Vardé. The first portion of this route, *i.e.*, as far as Mashed-Obad, is the best part of the whole road to Meshed, on account of the abundance of water found along it, as also because it runs partly through a populated country, and is, therefore, comparatively little exposed to attacks of robbers, who are greatly feared by the Persians. On the road beyond Mamed-Obad, on the southern declivity of the Allah-Akber Pass, a most interesting historical monument occurs. This is the ladder of a thousand steps ("Nerdban") cut out of the rock by order of Nadir-Shah. It is a work on which a great amount of labour has been expended. The length of the steps is 5 feet, the breadth 1 foot, and the height about 7 inches. . . . .

From Meshed, the capital of Khorassan, with which Russian traders and Russian goods are becoming more and more familiar, M. Lessar proceeded to the Badkhyz, by way of Zur-abad, a small fort on the frontier, not far distant from the western banks of the Heri-rud. Here the Shah-Zadé, or Prince Ruler, endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to prevent our traveller continuing his journey.

* In some parts of Kelat, owing to the frequency of rain, irrigation is not employed in the cultivation of the fields. This style of agriculture is called "damié."

After crossing over to the eastern bank of the Heri-rud, M. Lessar first shaped his course southwards, in the direction of Herat, and then turned northwards towards Sarakhs.

This part of the journey was performed in safety. Some Merv robbers, consisting of four men, at first took M. Lessar and his followers for Sarakhs. On discovering the Russian character of M. Lessar's party, they sought to be presented to him.

The Badkhyz country does not possess a good climate, owing to strong northerly winds which blow here during the greater part of the year. Hence the derivation of the name of the country: "bad" = wind, and "khazten" (from the root "khyz"), to rise. Water is found throughout in abundance; but the country once populated now presents the appearance of a wilderness of ruins, thanks to the Mervis and Sarakhs who have selected this country as the centre of their predatory operations. M. Lessar found no current in the Heri-rud River. Here and there there were pools of water, occasionally salt to the taste. The bed of the river consists throughout of large cobble stones, and during the prevalence of high water a current is visible, especially in the deep parts of the river. The natives attribute the existence of pools in the river in the hot months of the year to an underground flow of water. The flow of water ceases almost at Khosan in the months of July and August. The river again renews its course more to the northward, where the Heri-rud falls into the Kara-Su, and attains considerable proportions at Noruz-abad, where it is fed by copious springs rising in the neighbourhood.

The river is full of water along its whole course about November or December, and a little later reaches Karibend.

Arriving at Sarakhs on the 22nd August, M. Lessar determined to return to Askabad by the circuitous route through Merv, Chardjui, Khiva, and then across the Ust-Urt. As the route thus selected presented many difficulties and possible privations, M. Lessar reduced his escort to five men. The road to Kale-Kowsheed, the chief settlement in Merv, passed as described by the natives through an arid country, in which salt water was alone procurable. On the road M. Lessar nearly fell a victim to the attack of a party of Mervis, who mistook him and his escort for a Persian caravan.

No. 150.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 12, 1883.*

THE inclosed short extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 10th instant alludes to an article in the "Agence Havas," which I have not seen, but which is stated to have reported a Russian expedition to the Tejend, the consequent dissatisfaction of the Persian Government, and the pretensions of the latter with regard to Merv.

The journal denies these statements. It admits that a reconnaissance was made on the Tejend for the purpose of repressing brigandage in those parts. It adds that Russia has no intention of going to Merv, neither has Persia the pretension nor the means to occupy that country, "which lies without the frontier agreed upon."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 150.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of October 29 (November 10), 1883.

L'AGENCE HAVAS est à l'affût des nouvelles à sensation. C'est son métier. Mais elle parle de choses qu'elle ne connaît pas, et c'est un tort.

Elle a entretenu dernièrement le monde d'une expédition Russe sur le Tejend, du mécontentement du Gouvernement Persan, des prétentions de celui-ci sur Merv, &c.

Tout cela n'existe que dans l'imagination du correspondant. Il y a eu en effet une reconnaissance faite sur le Tejend. C'est la conséquence de la mission qui incombe au Gouvernement Russe de mettre un terme aux brigandages dans la steppe. Cela explique le mystère signalé par "l'Agence" sur les raisons qui ont motivé le

retour de l'expédition. Une reconnaissance a toujours pour résultat le retour du détachement qui l'a accomplie.

Les Gouvernements Russe et Persan sont d'accord sur le but à poursuivre dans ces parages. La Russie n'a pas plus l'intention d'aller à Merv que la Perse n'élève la prétention et n'a les moyens d'occuper cette contrée, qui reste en dehors de la frontière convenue.

L'Agence Havas en est pour ses frais d'imagination. Ses renseignements ne troubleront pas le *statu quo* pacifique résultant des négociations amicales entre la Russie et la Perse.

No. 151.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 13, 1883.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 12th instant, I have the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of the continuation of M. Lessar's journey to Merv and other places in that neighbourhood.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 151.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Journey in 1882.

(Translation.)

In Dereghez, Merv, &c.

HALTING for the night at a short distance from Merv, I awaited the return of the Téké whom I had dispatched to the Khans to intimate to them my arrival. My messenger came back during the night with a reply that the Khans were very glad of my visit, and that they would send some of their followers in the morning to meet and conduct me to Merv.

The Khans in Merv are frequently changed. In August 1882 the following was the position of affairs there:—

The Merv Turkomans, as is known, are divided into two great tribes, subdivided into two principal branches: the Otamysh, formed of the Bakshi and Sitchmaz tribes, and the Tokhtamysh, consisting of Beks and Vekils.

The present hereditary Khans of both tribes are men of no energy and influence. Early in 1882 the Otamyshes chose as their Chief Maily, grandson of Oraz, who was formerly Khan of the whole of Merv, and son of Berdy Niaz, and also nephew of Amon-Niaz, the two last Khans of the Otamysh tribe. But Maily Khan proved so weak and deficient in intellect that no one recognized his authority, and in the month of July of the same year the Bakhshis elected as their own Khan Sary-Batyr, who, though a man of obscure descent, was very clever and astute.

In the month of October Maily was re-elected Khan, and in December a change took place again, and the Bakhshis chose as Khan Sardy-Batyr, while the Sitchmiaz tribe elected Bek-Murad, a well-known robber, who so much persecuted Mr. O'Donovan during the whole of his stay in Merv.

Still worse are the Khans of the Tokhtamysh tribe: Baba-Khan, son of Koushut Khan, who defeated the Persians in 1860, and Kur-Verdi Yusun, son of Kur-Verdi Khan, the no less celebrated defender of Geok-Tépé, exercise no influence over their tribesmen. The present Chief of the Tokhtamysh is Kara-Kuli Khan, who, though not of good descent, is an ambitious and energetic man. His influence, however, is also not great. In order to understand the social structure of the Turkomans, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that they are not a race united by a community of interests, but simply a band of robbers on a large scale. For such a fraternity no Government is of course necessary, but only a few rulers are requisite for the division of booty, as also is some understanding for the maintenance of friendly relations between themselves, by showing mutual respect for each other's property. It is only the big dam on the Murgab River which distributes water throughout the whole oasis; that is of grave and equal importance to all the tribes. When this dam is destroyed

by floods, which occur every twelve or fifteen years, the whole population of the oasis suffers great privations. The question of the maintenance of this dam is the only one treated with some degree of attention.

The best proof of the inaptitude of the Tékés of Merv for dealing with matters of common interest is afforded by their attitude towards the Sarakhs, who, notwithstanding their small numbers, terrorize the whole Merv oasis, and render almost impossible all trading relations between it and the neighbouring countries. The Tékés have only to combine and Pende would cease to exist. Instead of doing this, they send out marauding parties of four or five men, who, approaching the Sarakh settlements by stealth, carry off women and children and also cattle.

On the 25th August, at 6 A.M., Sary-Batyr's messengers arrived and conducted me to the Khan's encampment. On the road I was besieged by Tékés on horse and on foot, eager to look at the Russian Boyar. The length of the road to Sary-Batyr's camp from the wells, where we passed the night, is about 4 miles, and thence to Koushut Khan Kala, also about 4 miles. The distance from Sarakhs to the latter point is reckoned at 6 menzelis (Persian stages of 13 miles to 15 miles each). According to my surveys I make out the distance to be the same, viz., 130 versts (86⅔ miles). The Khans received me with great civility. I was asked among other questions when the Russians would march to Merv. That, I explained, depended on themselves, for so vast a country as Russia cannot exist side by side with a nest of robbers, who give their neighbours no peace. I further told them if they would take to peaceful pursuits and maintain friendly relations with their neighbours, there would in such case be no necessity for Russia to occupy Merv. The administration of the conquered Akhal country, with a population of 50,000, cost Russia a great deal, and only necessity would compel her to spend more money on a province of equal size. At one time, I proceeded to say, the Bokharians, Khivans, and Persians strove to conquer Merv; but then wars were waged for the purpose of despoiling the conquered. From the way in which the Russians rule in Akhal, the Tékés of Merv find they are not despoiled. The questions put to me as to the Russian advance on Merv were not inspired by fear, but rather by a desire for an influx of money into the country. There are, indeed, many men among the Tékés who impatiently desire to see Russia in occupation of Merv.

After having heard so much of the riches of Merv, I was struck by the poverty that in reality prevails there. . . . , The Téké is by nature a thief, and possesses the vices of a thief not counterbalanced by any good qualities. He is lazy, and works only to save himself from starvation. The soil of Merv is good, and water abundant, but the Tékés cultivate only such crops as require the smallest amount of labour expended on them. Clover is generally sown, because it yields several crops during the year, and one sowing lasts for many seasons. Wheat, on the other hand, is but little cultivated, and during bad harvest years is purchased in Bokhara and Persia. Robbery, it would seem, also yields but little profit. . . . . A Téké who possesses 700 sheep is considered a very rich man. There is scarcely any trade. The roads leading to Bokhara and Meshed are unsafe, owing to the depredations of the Sarakhs. The wants also of the poverty-stricken Mervis are but few. A bazaar is held twice a week, but owing to the scarcity of money but few sales are effected. When it is necessary to make a purchase two or three Tékés join together, pack up some of their productions—carpets or feltings—and start off to Khiva, Bokhara, or Meshed: latterly they have taken to resorting to Askabad, where they dispose of their wares, and return with green tea, one or two "khalats," and a few yards of Turkey red cotton tissue. Such is the character of the whole trade. Artificers of any kind are rarely found in Merv. The only things made there are—fur hats, robes, coarse linen, and carpets. All other articles necessary for domestic and other uses are bought in the neighbouring countries.

According to Téké testimony, the population of Merv does not exceed 200,000 men. Those who are better acquainted with the state of things estimate the population at 125,000, or at 150,000 as a maximum computation. This latter calculation is, in all probability, correct; generally speaking, the numbers of the Turkomans, established on hearsay evidence, have always proved exaggerated. The Akhal may be cited as a proof of this; its population before the war was supposed to consist of 150,000 souls, while the real number now proves not to exceed 40,000. Taking into account the losses sustained by the Tékés during the war and the numbers who fled the country, the original figure could never have surpassed 75,000. Besides, there was not enough water in the Akhal country for a large population. Good horses in the oasis are very rare. It is difficult to make any positive assertions as to the powers

of endurance of their well-bred horses during long campaigns. Owing to the small quantity of food a Téké gives his horse the latter cannot travel more than twenty to twenty-five days; even some well-fed animals seen by me yielded in powers of endurance not only to Russian Cossack horses, but even to those of Persian origin. The Tékés of Merv are badly armed; properly speaking, the tribe is unarmed. A serviceable gun costs about 4*l.* at Meshed—a sum only a Khan can afford to pay; and in reality it is only men of this class who have breech-loaders at all. Even the worst possible guns are rarely met with among the Tékés; robber bands alone are generally provided with such weapons. Swords are the only arms carried by those who accompany caravans.

The Téké, with all his laziness, is also avaricious and parsimonious. He starves his horse, and his own fare is of the scantiest. He tries, as far as possible, to live at the expense of his neighbours; he spends a few copecks in purchasing tobacco and green tea, which he drinks very weak, without sugar.

When starting on long journeys I was always obliged to look whether there was even a little corn in the saddle-bags for the horses of my Téké escort.

This avarice and parsimony is attributed by M. Lessar to the widely prevalent practice of hoarding money with a view of purchasing wives; love for the fair sex being, next to robbery, the dominating passion of the Téké. The average price for a wife varies between 40*l.* and 50*l.* According to M. Lessar, the relations between the sexes in the oasis are rather of a loose character, and the Tékés are generally much given to amorous gallantry, the pursuit of which, however, as our traveller states, is frequently attended with considerable drawbacks, and even pecuniary losses.

No. 152.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 17, 10·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 17, 1883.

I UNDERSTAND Persian Government has resolved to allow Eyoub Khan to quit the Persian territory by way of Khorassan; he will accordingly leave Tehran within the next fortnight, and proceed to Meshed, accompanied by a Persian official deputed by the Shah to escort him to the Persian frontier at Sarakhs.

No. 153.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 23, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 22, 1883, 9·20 P.M.

EYOUB KHAN will probably leave Tehran in ten days and cross Persian frontier at Sarakhs about the 10th January, with avowed object of proceeding by Merv to Bokhara; he will have from 300 to 400 followers with him. I continue to object to his going towards the Afghan border, especially with such a numerous retinue, but the Shah is so anxious to get rid of Afghan refugees, that I fear latter can now no longer be detained in Persia.

No. 154.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 24, 1883.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 17th.

You might intimate to the Persian Government that in the event of Eyoub Khan being allowed to quit Persian territory at a point where he could with facility intrigue against the authority of the Ameer of Afghanistan in his western and north-western provinces, it would be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a very unfriendly act, and they could no longer use their influence with the Ameer with a view of restraining Persian refugees in Afghanistan from residing near the Persian frontier and carrying on intrigues against the authority of the Shah in Persia.

No. 155.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November 20, 1883.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 13th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell, from the "Novoe Vremya," of the continuation of M. Lessar's journey to Merv, and thence to Bokhara.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 155.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of October 24 (November 5), 1883.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Journey through Persia to Merv in 1882.

(Translation.)

ON the third day, in the morning, I started to pay a visit to Kara-Kuli Khan. The distance from the settlement of Sary Khan, where I had taken up my quarters, was about 4 miles. I was accompanied by an interpreter and guide. The road lay through gardens and fields. We crossed the Murghab at the ford, the water being up to the horses' knees; the breadth of the stream was about 8 fathoms. Near the ford is a small wooden bridge, erected on piles, and covered with brushwood and earth; this bridge, however, not being very strong, is used chiefly by pedestrians. Directly beyond is situated the large fort of Koùshut Khan Kala. Betweeen the bridge and the fort is the bazaar, consisting of a row of stalls made of clay. Close to the bazaar I saw an old cannon taken from the Persians in 1860. Afterwards I saw several of these pieces; they were all antiquated, and would be dangerous only to those who tried to fire them.

The fort of Koùshut Khan Kala was named after Koùshut Khan, who defeated the Persians in 1860, and who commenced its construction.

After the defeat sustained by the Turkomans during the Khivan Expedition, the Mervees, fearing an advance of Russian troops southwards, commenced to construct forts, but at once desisted on becoming convinced that their apprehensions were unfounded. The same thing occurred after the fall of Geok-Tépé, notwithstanding all the entreaties of O'Donovan; as soon as our troops stopped advancing the construction of forts by the Tékés was abandoned. The Tékés very unwillingly apply themselves to the work of erecting these colossal forts, and only submit to do so in moments of danger. The fort is in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, with two large walls, of about 1 mile in length, and one smaller, about half-a-mile long; the wall from the south side has not yet been commenced. The walls have a very sharp profile, being about 70 feet at the base and 40 feet in height; earth has been taken both from the inside and outside; the moat is not deep, and the Tékés are unable to increase its depth, as water is met with close to the surface. On the north side, which is lower, the moat is overgrown with reeds, and in places there are pools of water. A colony of Jews, who trade in Merv, live within the walls of the fort.

Close to the fort is the domicile of Kara-Kuli Khan. The same conversation took place with him as with Sary-Batyr. I noticed, however, that the Chief of the Tokhtamysh was somewhat annoyed. He commenced by inveigling against the Otamysh Turkomans: "They received you," he said, "and lost no time in sending a messenger to acquaint the English Agent at Meshed of your arrival." I was surprised to hear this; had I thought the matter of interest I would, when at Meshed, have told him of my intended journey.

Respecting O'Donovan, Kara-Kuli Khan spoke contemptuously. The man was always intoxicated; no one in Merv cared to know him. I laughed, and replied that we knew of the doings of the "Ingliz" from his correspondence. Kara-Kuli Khan did not again refer to the "Ingliz."

My hope of getting rid of the Tokhtamyshes by an ordinary visit was not realized. On taking leave, Kara-Kuli Khan explained to the interpreter the cause of his displeasure. I had passed three days with the Otamyshes, and was going to leave Merv without accepting the hospitality of the Tokhtamyshes. What motive could I have? The Tokhtamyshes were the more powerful tribe, and not less friendly towards Russia. Why, therefore, this affront? It was in vain, I explained, that with us a visit was equal

to residing in the house of a friend. The Khan's displeasure only increased. Of course, I could please myself, but the Tokhtamyshes did not deserve this slight. I was obliged to give in, and lost no time in transferring myself to Kara-Kuli Khan's domicile, on the understanding that I was to be allowed to depart on the following day. In all this incident self-interest played no small part. Kara-Kuli Khan hoped to supply me with camels, guides, &c., at his own price. This, however, was not the sole motive; probably the Khan would have been ready to put himself to a loss rather than allow the Otamyshes to boast of their having monopolized a guest. Jealousy is a prominent trait in the Merv character, as in the case of all marauding bands. It is impossible to remain ten minutes with one tribe without hearing something prejudicial to the others. . . . . .

Kara-Kuli Khan lives in a felt tent; but he has erected a small house for the convenience of his guests.

The ordinary round of visits commenced; the most interesting was the visit of Makhdum-Kuli, the son of Nurverdi Khan, who commanded the Akhal Tékés in 1879. On the death of his father, in the early part of 1880, Makhdum-Kuli was regarded as the Khan of the Akhal Tékés, although, in view of his youth, the defence was conducted by Tykma-Virdar, in the character of Commander-in-chief. On the fall of Geok-Tépé, Makhdum-Kuli fled to Merv, and, on the strength of promises held out by O'Donovan, he did not appear with the other Khans to offer his submission. When O'Donovan left Merv, Makhdum-Kuli Khan recognized that he had acted injudiciously, but it was too ate. Tykma-Virdar, in consequence of the rank conferred on him by the Russians, acquired considerable importance in Akhal, and thus Makhdum-Kuli's influence gradually diminished. . . . My arrival at Merv gave rise to many surmises; of course, as I was journeying from Sarakhs to Bokhara, Merv lay in my route, but the Mervees were convinced that I had other objects in view. My guide was repeatedly interrogated regarding the real purport of my visit.

Makhdum-Kuli Khan entertained hopes that I was the bearer of certain proposals on the part of the Russian Government; he was surprised at the indifference with which he was treated at Askabad, and he tried to ascertain what awaited him if he returned? The answer was always the same; there was no necessity for his presence; if he desired he might return; it rested with him; Russia bore him no ill-will for the part he took in the war; there was nothing for which to punish him.

The Khan came to see me without his suite. Everybody expected something confidential, and when the Khans entered the room all rose and withdrew. We remained alone with the interpreters. The Khan was evidently agitated; after greeting each other, he regarded me with an expectant look: I conversed on ordinary topics, in which the Khan showed no interest, and remained silent. After the Khan had drank two large cups of tea, I broke the silence by asking if he wished to say anything. "No," replied Makhdum Khan, in a very decisive tone of voice. The interpreter filled the Khan's cup with tea, which he sipped slowly, and shortly took his leave.

I saw him a second time at Askabad, in the month of October, before my departure for Merv to attend the election of Maily Khan.

In the presence of the Commander of the troops ot the region, Makhdum-Kuli Khan took his oath of allegiance to the White Czar; Makhdum-Kuli Khan was accompanied by a suite of about twenty men; a number of Akhal Tékés also collected to witness the ceremony. He gave up his sabre, and being still under the impression that he would be punished for the tardiness of his return, he repeated after the Mollah the words of the oath in a voice trembling with emotion. When General Röhrberg announced to him that the past was forgotten, the Khan begged only that he should be remembered when he had given proofs of his fidelity. Makhdum-Kuli Khan does not possess considerable influence in Akhal, and consequently his submission could have no effect on the tranquillity of the region; it was merely interesting as a sign that even the most obdurate Tékés are becoming convinced of the irrevocability of the condition of things established after the 12th January, 1881. This conviction is at present very strong, and may for a long time avert the necessity of any advance of Russian troops, if only no influence is brought to bear on Merv from without. . . . . .

From Merv to Bokhara.

M. Lessar left Kowshut-Kala on the 28th August, proceeding along the caravan road to Bokhara. This route is accounted very dangerous, as it is frequently subjected to the attacks of the Saryks. The traveller, however, did not attach much importance to these attacks; he considers the bravery of the Turkomans exaggerated. . . . .

Forty versts from Kowshut-Kala water is found in abundance; beyond stretches the

sandy waste. The road leads across a desert, but wells occur frequently. Commencing from the well of Sirab (96 versts from Kowshut-Kala), the roads to Bokhara branch off. It was found on inquiry that some of these roads, though more convenient, have become impassable owing to the Saryks having polluted the water in the wells. From Sirab to the well of Adil, the most difficult portion of the route is encountered; for a distance of 90 versts there is no water, and the road is over friable sand.

M. Lessar divides the sand of the Transcaspian Steppe into three kinds. The first consists of a clayey soil, with a large proportion of sand; the country presents rows of mounds, about a fathom in height, and generally overgrown with brushwood; the passage of riders as well as of vehicles over this ground is not difficult. Such is the road from Merv to the Attek, at Cherkezli, and between Sarakhs and Chatcha.

The second description consists of mounds containing a greater proportion of fine sand; the sand is not friable, being bound by brushwood. The passage of wheeled vehicles over this ground is very difficult; horses, however, and especially camels, pass freely. This description of sand is encountered in the steppe, on the road from Khiva to Akhal, Attek and Merv, between Mikhailofsky Bay and Molla-Kara, &c. . . . Experience in connection with the Transcaspian Railway has proved that traffic suffers less from sand drifts than from snow drifts in Russia.

The most dangerous, however, are the so-called "barkhans" (sand hillocks); the sand is perfectly fine, and there is no vegetation. The slightest wind fills up the tracks of the caravan almost as soon as they are made.

Adam-Kyrylgan is the name given to one spot, and means the "destruction of man;" at this place whole caravans have been buried under the sands by hurricanes. This sand occurs in the south-eastern corner of the Transcaspian desert near the Oxus. A bright sun lights up the dismal picture of these sand mounds; on all sides the horizon is broken by small yellowish grey mounds, which oppress the sight of the traveller with their uniform configuration. Progress over such ground is very laborious, the horses sinking at every step, and scarcely able to drag their feet out of the sand. Great caution is necessary in order not to lose the road; there is nothing from which to construct leading marks, nor anything on which to suspend camel bones; only at long intervals the traveller passes sticks, thrust into the sand by caravans in order to indicate the route.

From Adil-Kué the travellers proceeded safely to the Bokharian settlement of Boyun-Usun on the Oxus, not far from Chardjui. On the route they frequently passed small depressions, about 3 fathoms in depth, which for some reason the natives regard as the ancient bed of the river. M. Lessar found the whole route from Sirab to the Oxus very bad and difficult.

After reaching Khiva, the traveller shortly returned to Askabad across the steppe along the great caravan route to Shakh-Sinem, Bala-Ishem, Kazi and Durun.

During the year 1882, M. Lessar traversed about 5,000 versts, and has, moreover, in the months of April and May of this year, made other excursions in the desert.

No. 156.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 21, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of yesterday, being a communication made to that paper by M. Lessar relative to the proceedings of so-called English agents in Merv. He argues that their influence is prejudicial; that they can only acquire any by encouraging the marauders in that region, who, he asserts, are the only discontented portion of the population. He contends that it would be better to exercise no such influence, and to cease to encourage predatory habits; for that if these should continue to exist, Russia may be forced to interfere in order to prevent disorder, and, in doing so, may acquire a position which might be considered more dangerous to England.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 156.

Abstract from Russian Press.

IN a communication addressed to the "Novoe Vremya" of the 8th (20th) November, 1883, on the subject of Mr. O'Donovan's proceedings at Merv, which are severely condemned, M. Lessar makes the following remarks with reference to the relations of Russia to Merv, as also the evil consequences resulting from the presence of alleged English Agents in the Merv oasis :—

"The Mervis have long since become convinced that all the promises held out by O'Donovan were false; and England's prestige in Central Asia has not gained therefrom. Of course, O'Donovan was personally responsible for his actions; it was generally announced that he was merely a correspondent, and if he incited the Mervis against Russia he did so from motives of his own, and not by authority."

This incited agitation in Central Asia meets but little approval on the part of prominent English statesmen; on the contrary, protests are made against it; on various occasions, Rawlinson, whilst recognizing the danger to England from the spread of Russian influence in Asia, at the same time admitted that it was impossible to deny the good effects arising from the establishment of order, which accompanied such spread. At a meeting of the London Geographical Society in 1882, the President, Lord Aberdeen, stated "that the barbarous condition of these countries could not be maintained merely to avoid the danger that might accrue to the British Empire." As an Englishman, and as a man, he loudly protested against the view held at the same meeting by Sir Richard Temple. As a fact, the pacification of the steppe is carried out by Russia with such disinterestedness, that her enemies are only to be found among that portion of the population which suffers from the introduction of order, *i.e.*, among marauders; and the only means of agitating against Russia in this quarter is by supporting robbery and pillage.

Of course, the present English Government would not have recourse to the assistance of robbers under any circumstances whatsoever; but in view of the distance separating England from Central Asia, the employment of secondary agents cannot depend entirely on the Government in London; consequently, other individuals have made their appearance since O'Donovan, who have acted in the same spirit that he did.

Thus, in the early part of November month, there arrived at Merv four Afghans. They openly announced that they were English agents; they counselled the Mervis not to open relations with Russia, distributed presents, and promised Ysuf, the youngest son of Nur Verdy Khan, to place him on the Merv Throne. The position of these agents is extremely unenviable; they only find partizans among the unruly portion of the population; they are obliged to propitiate robbers, and make promises which cannot be fulfilled, and all this to no purpose; the money with which these agents are always well supplied is accepted by the Mervis, and letters are written. On the following day the same Khans will declare that they cannot influence their tribes, and that when the time shall arrive they will act according to circumstances. Undoubtedly, this coquetting on the part of the English will always be accompanied by the renewal of robbery and pillage in the region. Towards the end of last year there were several raids made from Merv, and each time these raids were preceded by rumours that English agents had arrived at Merv and were distributing arms and money. It may have been that these agents actually appeared, or that the Mervis in their simplicity imagined that the rumours of British agents would save the marauders of their tribe from the punishment they merited. The important fact of the matter is, that the Turkomans harbour a conviction that English protection is bound up with the possibility of renewing robbery, pillage, &c.

It is difficult to see who is to benefit by all this; true, bands of robbers from time to time interfere with travellers and merchants proceeding from Russia, but they cannot inflict any material harm on that country. Independent Merv is not dangerous to Russia; the rich Merv nation, about which so much was spoken, no longer exists; there is a large band of robbers, consisting of about 150,000 poverty-stricken individuals, completely unorganized, badly armed, and placed as regards defences in a much worse condition than the Akhal Tékés. This rabble, of course, cannot affect political combinations. Injury can only accrue to Russia when the pillaging raids of these robbers become so audacious that she will be compelled to go to war on their account.

Not a single conquest has Russia made in Central Asia with the object of threatening England; all such conquests were the result of the necessity of establishing order on the frontier; the history of all intercourse with savage marauding tribes has long since shown that the establishment of order can only be attained by their complete subjection; all expeditions dispatched for purposes of chastisement have only proved palliative, and at the same time very expensive ones.

On the other hand, it is very natural if Russia, in these involuntarily conquests, acquires strategical advantages that she should utilize them when circumstances demand; consequently, if the English consider the occupation of Merv by Russia detrimental to England's interests, they should endeavour to stave off, as long as possible, such occupation. All that is necessary is, that no inciting influence be brought on Merv from without; the Mervis left to themselves will not forget for a long time the punishment incurred by the Akhals; they will restrain their predatory propensities, and in such case it may be long ere Russia need think of advancing on Merv. Whether a collision will take place between England and Russia in Asia, when it may come about, and whether Merv will be of any benefit to Russia in such case, are all very problematical questions, and in all probability they will be solved in the distant future; at the present time, we have too many more pressing affairs to occupy us than rooting out a nest of robbers, and too many more necessary outlays to make than to spend money in maintaining troops and guarding new profitless territory. The longer Merv remains independent the better for Russia; its occupation at any time would not be difficult, whilst its possession would be extremely unprofitable. Merv in this respect bears a great resemblance to Candahar.

(Signed) LESSAR, *Engineer.*

No. 157.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 5.)

My Lord, *Tehran, November 2, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I brought the question of Ayoub Khan's proposed departure from Tehran under discussion during the conversation which I had with the Shah on the 20th ultimo. I referred to the communications which had passed between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and myself on this subject, and especially to the note I had addressed to his Excellency on the 14th September, in which I called the attention of the Persian Government to the danger of allowing Ayoub Khan to quit the Persian territory at any point whence he could with facility intrigue against the Ameer's authority on the frontiers of Afghanistan. The Shah said that he had read the communication to which I referred, and that he was most anxious to carry out the wishes of Her Majesty's Government in the matter. He found himself placed, however, in a position of some embarrassment, Ayoub Khan being apparently resolved to leave by way of Khorassan, and the Persian Government being decidedly reluctant to prevent him forcibly from doing so, seeing that he had from 200 to 300 armed followers with him, who might offer resistance and bring about a serious conflict with the Persian authorities. It had been suggested that they would escape from this difficulty, the Shah said, if Ayoub Khan left by way of Russia, and the Russian Minister had been asked if he would be allowed to proceed through Russian territory to Bokhara, to which place he had declared his intention of going, but M. Melnikoff had replied that he would not be permitted to do so.

His Majesty assured me that every effort would be made to dissuade Ayoub Khan from proceeding towards Khorassan, and during the last ten days the Nasseer ed Dowleh has been in almost constant communication with him and some of his chief adherents with that object, but as yet he has been unable to come to any satisfactory arrangement with them.

I yesterday received a message from the Shah, desiring that I should see the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had a communication to make to me on the subject. I accordingly called upon his Excellency during the afternoon, and he read to me a telegram he had received from Malcom Khan in reply to an instruction which was sent to him last week respecting Ayoub Khan. Malcom Khan stated that no objection could be made to Ayoub Khan's departure by way of Khorassan, if care was taken to prevent his lingering on Persian territory near the Afghan frontier, and he informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he had written in this sense to your Lordship.

The Shah was disposed to act at once on this suggestion, and to allow all the Afghan refugees to leave Tehran for Meshed forthwith. I have recommended His Majesty to await Malcom Khan's report as to the result of the communications he has held with Her Majesty's Government on this subject, and I have advised the Persian Government to bear in mind that Ayoub Khan's being allowed to proceed to Khorassan or through Persian territory to any place where he can intrigue and create

disturbances on the Afghan border, may lead to retaliation on the part of Abdul Rahman Khan and serious complications with the Afghans hereafter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 158.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 10.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December 4, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Novoe Vremya" of the 21st November (3rd December), 1883, states that on the strength of representations made by General Tchernaieff, the Ministry of War has applied to the Council of the Empire for the assignment of 41,679 roubles to cover the expenses of transferring some of the troops stationed at Tashkend to the Oxus military section. This transfer, it is stated, is necessary, in view of the scheme now adopted for the construction of a new fort on the Oxus, and the establishment of steam-boat navigation on that river.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 159.

Mr. Godley to Mr. Currie.—(Received December 16.)

Sir, *India Office, December 16, 1883.*

WITH reference to former correspondence relative to the movements of Eyoub Khan, I am directed by the Earl of Kimberley to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram received from the Viceroy of India, pointing out that the intention of the Persian Government to allow Eyoub to quit Persia immediately by Khorassan will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) J. A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 159.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Telegraphic.) *December 15, 1883.*

HER Majesty's Minister at Tehran telegraphs that the Persian Government has officially notified intention of allowing Eyoub to quit Persia immediately by Khorassan. This will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

No. 160.

*Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.**

Sir, *Foreign Office, December 18, 1883.*

I HAVE received through the Secretary of State for India a copy of a telegram from the Viceroy of India, stating his opinion that if Eyoub Khan be permitted to quit Persian territory by Khorassan, it will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

I have to instruct you to point this out to the Ministers of the Shah, and to state that the grant of such permission by the Persian Government, with the knowledge of the danger which must result to the peace of Central Asia cannot but be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a seriously unfriendly act towards England.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

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* Substance telegraphed.

No. 161.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December 17, 1883.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the 3rd (15th) December, 1883, states that negotiations are proceeding between the Russian and Persian Governments respecting the construction of more convenient means of communication between the two countries. At present there is only one such route, viz., viâ Astrabad, but this road presents difficulties.

The Russian Government propose to establish communication with Persia from Geuk-Tépé by means of two roads, *i.e.*, through the Herbash and Rabat Passes. The first-named road is finished, and the sum of 25,000 silver roubles has been assigned for the completion of the second. The negotiations now in progress with the Persian Government refer to the construction of roads in Persia in connection with these two Russian roads.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 162.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 28, 6·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, December 28, 1883.*

I HEAR that Russian force of 1,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, with 10 guns, entered Atek of Deregez on the 20th, proceeding to the Tejend.

No. 163.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January 2, 1884.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo, during an interview which I had this afternoon with M. Vlangaly, I told him that news had reached me of a Russian force consisting of 1,000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 10 guns having entered the Atek of Dereghez, and being on their way to the Tejend. I inquired what would be the object of this expedition.

His Excellency replied that he was not aware of any force having been sent in that direction, but he was not much surprised at learning it. He said that on the occasion of the raid which had been made about two months ago into Persian territory by Turkoman raiders, when they carried off a number of cattle and sheep, and, as he believed, some men, the Persian Government had appealed to the Imperial Government to use their influence for the recovery of their property, &c., which had been taken.

Instructions had consequently been sent to the Commander of the forces at Askabad to do his best to meet the wishes of the Persian Government. M. Vlangaly supposed that it had been found impossible to do so without the use of force, and that a small detachment had consequently been dispatched for that purpose: but his Excellency doubted whether it could be nearly so large as I had mentioned, nor could he answer my inquiry as to the particular direction which the force in question would take.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 164.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 8, 1884.*

THE Persian Minister at this Court called on me on the 4th instant, and after the delivery of a complimentary message from the Shah, inquired what suggestion Her Majesty's Government could make as to the future of Eyoub Khan.

Malcom Khan said that the Shah might, although it was a matter of great difficulty on account of the claim of a guest upon a Mahommedan Government, for a time fulfil his engagement with Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran for the custody of Eyoub Khan, but that it was impossible to keep him a prisoner, or to use force which might ultimately end in the death of Eyoub Khan.

He wished Her Majesty's Government to suggest what course the Shah should take.

I informed Malcom Khan in reply that I would consult with the Secretary of State for India, but that I presumed that the answer would be that the object of Her Majesty's Government, which was a reasonable one, was well known to the Shah, and that as for the means of accomplishing it, the Shah must be the best judge.

Malcom Khan said that it was a friendly request for a suggestion, and asked whether Her Majesty's Government would invite Eyoub to India, or have him sent to some place in Turkey, such as Bagdad.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 165.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January 9, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an abstract from the "St. Petersburgh Gazette" of the 5th instant, testifying to the good order established in Russian Turkestan. It shows, however, that this result has been effected at a heavy cost to the Imperial Government, and that during the last sixteen years as much as 115,000,000 roubles has been spent upon that country beyond what its revenue has produced.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 165.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to the "St. Petersburgh Gazette" of the 24th December, 1883 (5th January, 1884), the result of M. de Giers' mission of revision to the Governor-Generalship of Russian Turkestan tends to show that the country has been completely pacified; that the right of property is respected, and that complete religious toleration exists. It would appear also that crime is on the decline, which would seem to prove that the material condition of the population is satisfactory.

On the other hand, M. de Giers is said to have arrived at the conclusion that the comparative prosperity of the Governor-Generalship has been attained at a heavy cost to the Imperial Exchequer. The revenue of the region has always been insufficient to meet the expenditure. In this manner the annual deficit during the sixteen years of existence of the Governor-Generalship averaged about 7,000,000 roubles. The general deficit during the same period amounted to no less than 115,000,000.

The accompanying Table which has been printed in the official section of the "Turkestan Gazette" (No. 48 of the 6th (18th) December, 1883), gives the amounts of revenue and expenditure in Russian Turkestan during the last fourteen years, the annual average deficit during that period being computed at 5,745,709 silver roubles 96 copecks.

Inclosure 2 in No. 165.

Extract from the "Turkestan Gazette" of December 6 (18), 1883.

(Translation.)

OFFICIAL Return of Revenue and Expenditure of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan for the Years 1869 to 1882.

Year.	Amount of Revenue.	Amount of Expenditure.	Deficit.
	Rbs. c.	Rbs. c.	Rbs. c.
1869	2,356,241 36	4,207,417 92	1,851,176 56
1870	2,915,983 64	6,114,833 21	3,198,899 57
1871	2,102,955 5	6,820,945 65	4,717,990 60
1872	2,008,374 99	7,576,186 69	5,567,811 70
1873	2,617,653 21	8,663,840 61	6,016,187 40
1874	2,949,918 36	8,103,866 87	5,153,948 51
1875	2,976,478 52	8,350,685 13	5,374,206 61
1876	4,020,958 11	9,029,186 33	5,008,228 22
1877	3,865,899 4	10,169,074 82	6,303,175 78
1878	3,835,800 61	11,958,550 7	8,122,749 46
1879	4,202,470 89	11,604,101 0	7,401,630 11
1880	4,120,491 69	11,428,310 71	7,307,819 2
1881	5,979,891 39	14,128,386 55	8,148,495 16
1882	6,315,458 29	12,583,079 12	6,267,620 83
Yearly average	3,590,612 50	9,338,461 76	5,745,709 96

Remark.—In 1882 a Governor-Generalship of the Steppe was established, which included the Semirechensk region, the receipts of which in 1882 amounted to 1,281,723 rbs. 21 c., and expenditure to 2,965,564 rbs. The deficit of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan for 1882, after deducting the above, would consequently be reduced to 4,586,333 rbs. 15 c.

No. 166.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 14, 1884.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 28th ultimo, informing me of the report which you had received of the invasion of the Atek of Deregez by a Russian force of 1,000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 10 guns, on their way to Tejend, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch on the subject from Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh.*

You will observe that, on being questioned on the matter, M. Vlangaly, whilst professing ignorance of the circumstance, expressed no surprise, and informed Sir E. Thornton that the expedition alluded to was probably the result of a request of which he was aware from the Persian Government to that of Russia for assistance in the recovery of property taken by the Turkomans in a recent raid.

Instructions had consequently been sent to the Russian Commander at Askabad to do his best to meet the wishes of the Persian Government. This, M. Vlangaly supposed, could not be done without the employment of force, though he was as doubtful of its being as numerous as was reported as he was of the direction that it would take.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 167.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 22, 1884.

THE Persian Minister called at this Office on the 9th instant, and pressed for an early answer from Her Majesty's Government with regard to the future of Ayoub Khan. He stated that Ayoub would shortly be arriving at Meshed, when the Persian authorities would have to decide what steps should be taken,

* No. 163.

It was pointed out to Malcom Khan that an assurance had been given to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran of the most positive kind, that Ayoub's followers would be reduced in numbers, and that he would be sent to Boojnoord, or some other point remote from the Afghan frontier.

Malcom Khan then again reverted to the difficulties which a compliance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government caused to the Shah. The expense of keeping him in Persia was great. The Afghan refugees had, for many years, cost the Persian Government 20,000*l.* a-year. If the Indian Government attached so much importance to Ayoub being kept away from Afghanistan why could they not make some pecuniary sacrifice, and either provide such a stipend as would reconcile him to remaining in Persia, or offer him an asylum in India? If the Indian Government would give 8,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* a-year for a few years the affair could be arranged. On being asked how he proposed that the money should be paid, Malcom Khan replied that it should be done through the Persian Government, but that 8,000*l.* was the least sum that would suffice. This suggestion was, he added, a personal one, but he was officially charged to press strongly for an early answer to the request he had addressed to me a few days ago for advice as to the mode of dealing with Ayoub Khan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 168.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 22, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an abstract of a paper recently read by M. Lessar, on the Kara-Kum desert, at a meeting of the Imperial Geographical Society.

It will be seen that at the end of this paper it is stated that the Tékés are desirous that Merv should be occupied by the Russians in order that their property may be safe from the raids of the Mervees.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 168.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremyia" of December 30, 1883 (*January* 9, 1884).

(Translation from the Russian.)

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the 30th December, 1883 (9th January, 1884) contains the following abstract of a paper recently read by M. Lessar, on the Kara-Kum sands, at a meeting of the Imperial Geographical Society:—

"The country bordered by the Ust-Urt, Khiva, Bokhara, Afghan Turkestan, the Atek and Akhal bears the general name of Kara-Kum, although it is not everywhere covered with sand, other description of soil being found.

"With regard to the so-called dry beds or channels which are found in the Kara-Kum, leading in various directions, no importance need be attached to them as a future means of water communication by the diversion of the Oxus.

"Only the confines of the region are irrigated by streams and rivulets.

"The traveller in the Kara-Kum must depend for his water supply solely on wells and kaki (rain-holes). The cisterns that existed formerly at various points have been destroyed by the Turkoman tribes.

"The wells, both as regards the quantity and quality of water, are very unequally distributed. The fresh-water wells are for the most part concentrated at no great distance from the borders of the desert; principally along the south-west and north-east frontier, parallel with the Kopet-dagh range and the Oxus.

"In the southern parts of the desert the wells become fewer and mostly contain salt water; along the northern frontier they are found in great number and bear the reputation of fresh-water wells, although in reality even the best of them (Bala-Ishem, for instance) contains an admixture of salt.

"Wells emitting a sulphurous odour are often met with in the desert, and this

arises from the well not being cleaned, or from the water having been polluted by Turkoman robbers.

"The majority of the wells in the desert are situated among the 'takirs'* and are supplied:—

"1. By water percolating in a natural manner through the sub-soil; and

"2. From the surface by means of water-courses dug for the purpose by the natives.

"Formerly great attention was paid by the inhabitants towards keeping these water-courses leading to the cisterns in order. Now, however, since the steppe has become nearly deserted, these water-courses have become silted up with sand. Wells in the centre of the desert are only met with at long intervals, generally from 150 to 170 versts apart, and only as an exception at a distance of 20 to 30 versts.

"In former years the Kara-Kum was more animated than it is at present; all the Turkoman tribes settled in the oases surrounding the steppe encamped there in winter for the purpose of depasturing their cattle, whilst some of the richer portion remained there during the whole year.

"When the Tékés settled at Merv, some thirty to forty years ago, the Kara-Kum was divided for camping purposes among the principal tribes as follows:—the south-western portion was occupied by Tékés of Akhal. To the east lay the camping-ground of the Tedjents and the Mervis, and only that portion nearest to the Oxus belonged to the Ersaris. The Turkomans of Khiva camped near that town. The north-western corner, abounding with water, was occupied by the Sheikh Turkomans, the Ata Turkoman camping between the Uzboi and the wells of Mersachili to the west, and the Onguz to the east.

"These nomad Turkomans seldom engage in pillage; like all persons possessed of some wealth they are anxious for the preservation of tranquillity in their region, and it is always the indigent portion of any tribe that robs and pillages when the opportunity presents itself. The success of the Tékés in 1855 and 1860 made them masters of the steppe, and the order of things in the Kara-Kum, as described above, underwent a change. After the death of Medemi Khan the Khivans ceased to meddle in the affairs of the nomads and the first to suffer were the Ata Turkomans. They had been entirely subjected to the Khan, and under his protection enjoyed considerable prosperity.

"The successors of Medemi Khan were too weak to afford any one protection, and could scarcely defend their own Khanate from pillage and raids. The Jomuds, Saryks, and Mervees commenced to attack the Ata, and these latter, having lost their flocks, dispersed in various directions. A similar fate befell the Sheikh tribe.

"The camping ground of the Tékés settled at Merv and at Akhal considerably diminished in extent.

"The cattle and flocks of the Akhalis in 1880 and 1881 were driven into the sandy steppe, and consequently did not suffer much from the war; the great loss occurred from raids of neighbouring tribes. The Akhalis were pillaged by the Jomuds and Goklans, and at times by their own brethren of Merv; these latter, however, always avoided shedding human blood.

"Before the fall of Geok-Tépé, the desert of Kara-Kum was frequented by bands of Kurd and Persian robbers, who were fitted out for these expeditions by Persian Khans living on the border; now, however, these raids are rare, and occur chiefly on the frontier near Persian territory.

"After the conquest of Akhal robbery diminished considerably on all sides; the Akhalis very seldom raid in the desert; when the inclination becomes too strong, the Akhal Turkoman pays a visit to the Mervis and joins them in their raids against the Saryks, and sometimes against the Persians.

"The Mervis most frequently attack the Saryks settled at Pendi. With the Ulatans, owing to their vicinity to Merv, there is no open hostility, and mutual attacks are rare. With the Saryks of Pendi, however, the Mervis carry on a fierce struggle, which is, of course, purely predatory; the robbers of both tribes generally advance by separate routes in order to avoid an encounter, and only attack unarmed travellers and caravans on the borders of the oasis.

"The Mervis also commit depredations on Persian and even on Afghan territory, but not frequently; in these cases, the Merv Headmen, in their explanations at Askhabad, attribute these raids to the Saryks.

"The Saryk Turkomans pillage all their neighbours; southern Turkomania is still inaccessible to caravans, and the eastern frontier of Khorassan is far from being completely pacified. The Saryks seldom advance in the Kara-Kum desert northwards

* A hard clayey soil, void of vegetation.

of the roads from Merv to Bokhara and Sarakhs, although occasionally they carry their depredations as far as Dert-Kui and Karry-bent; along the above-mentioned roads their appearance is very common, and constitutes the chief obstacle to the development of trading relations between Bokhara, Merv, and Persia. The Eresaris, who recognize the authority of the Ameer of Bokhara, carry on their depredations secretly and in small parties; if the robbery is discovered the guilty are handed over to the Ameer, and the plundered property restored to the rightful owners by the Khan of Tchardjui. Owing to the supineness of the Bokharian authorities the majority of the depredations pass unpunished.

"In summing up the foregoing it may be said that the northern portion of the Kara-Kum is completely pacified; the central part, which possesses importance as regards the relations of Southern Akhal and Khiva, presents certain danger to trade caravans from attacks of robber bands. The southern portion, *i.e.*, the route from Attek and Khorassan to Merv, and further to Bokhara, remains in very much the same position as heretofore, that is to say, danger abounds everywhere.

"The borders of the desert offer very slight obstacles to communication, but these difficulties increase as the centre is approached.

"The routes traversing the Kara-Kum are only practicable for pack animals; those parts that are adapted for wheel traffic are separated by sand, through which it would be impossible to penetrate on wheels. Of course I am speaking now of the practicability of the routes for the transport of goods; the passage of mountain or even field guns, which are generally transported in small numbers and, in most cases, regardless of trouble or expense, is quite possible along nearly all the routes.

"With regard to the routes which do not cross the Kara-Kum itself, but merely pass along its frontier (the roads from Khiva to Krasnovodsk and from Atek to Merv), it may be said that wheel traffic would not be impeded to any great extent by sand.

"All the large routes are equally adapted, as regards the soil, for horses, camels, donkeys, and mules, but in summer time the scarcity of water renders it impossible to employ horses. In view of this caravans generally consist exclusively of camels. Even the escort drivers are on foot, and afford but a slight protection against mounted robbers.

"It is only the camel that is able to exist three days without water; these animals are allowed a good rest at the wells and at their journey's end, and they suffer but little. From June to the end of August, however, the scorching winds of the desert render travelling almost impossible even with camels.

"During summer communication between the Akhal and Atek, and Khiva and Bokhara, notwithstanding the length of the route, is carried on by skirting the Kara-Kum from the north (viâ Bala-Ishem) or from the south by way of Merv.

"In consequence of the enumerated difficulties traffic and depredations of robber bands commence late in the autumn and continue till early spring; during the great heats attacks are impossible; the horses of the Turkoman robbers would be exhausted before the caravans were encountered.

"As stated above, the wells in the desert are for the most part badly supplied with water and when exhausted refill very slowly; on this account caravans are always split up into small parties; where there is not much danger of robbers (on the road from Khiva to Krasnovodsk) caravans of three or four camels, with two or three attendants, are the usual complement.

"The foregoing precautions for lessening the difficulties of travelling in the desert are only possible where no danger exists, otherwise communication becomes extremely difficult. This is the reason why since the death of Medemi Khan and the defeat of the Persians in 1860, trade traffic across the Kara-Kum has diminished to its present insignificant extent.

"In reviewing the means for improving the means of communication in the Kara-Kum, the essential point is to decide what should be done to re-establish pack traffic in the desert, inasmuch as the introduction of other means of communication is at the present time scarcely practicable.

"One of the chief measures must be of course to re-establish the former water supply and adopt means for the further development of the same.

"Very many wells, at places which formerly constituted the chief halting stations in crossing the Kara-Kum are now filled up; there, where formerly caravans found water at short intervals, now waterless tracts of 100 versts and more occur. This is owing partly to the fact that the wells have been neglected by the nomads and

principally to the pollution of the water by robbers when returning from their raids in order to render pursuit as difficult as possible. The restoration of the wells should be a matter of first consideration, and luckily does not require great outlay.

"The erection of leading marks along the routes would be very serviceable in many places, and is not a difficult or an expensive undertaking, seeing that the material is always at hand; for this purpose would serve pieces of limestone and brushwood where the soil is clayey, and brushwood and the bones of camels and horses on the sandy steppe. It is only in the drifting sands that no material could be found, but this could be conveyed to certain parts without much difficulty.

"To what extent the erection of marks is necessary and their want recognized is shown by the fact that the neighbouring Khans always erected marks when any considerable body of men crossed the Kara-Kum. Along all the routes traversed by Medemi Khan with his troops are marks to indicate the "Farsangs."

"The construction of caravanserais near wells, which would always be points of protracted stoppage, would complete the improvement of routes in the Kara-Kum; but there is no absolute necessity for these places of shelter, owing to the scarcity of rain.

"The maintenance of the roads when once improved would depend on the subjugation of the region. In time of tranquillity the cleansing of wells is not difficult; it has been shown above how the presence of robbers affects the condition of the roads.

"The complete pacification of the steppe is necessary not alone for stimulating trading relations between the neighbouring countries, but also for the advancement of the prosperity of the Turkoman tribe. In Akhal, Khiva, Bokhara, and even in Merv, the majority of the inhabitants have become convinced that it is impossible to return to the former condition of things and to exist by pillage. The present tranquil state of the steppe is regarded, however, as only temporary and inspires but little confidence in the minds of the Turkomans; most of the inhabitants continue to live in settlements, and are afraid to develop their cattle-breeding, notwithstanding that it is their sole means of acquiring wealth. A similar temporary tranquillity existed not long ago, during the rule of Medemi Khan, but it was of short duration: with the death of the Khan there commenced an unprecedented period of disorder in the Kara-Kum.

"The Tékés, themselves, indicate the means of a final pacification of the region, *i.e.*, the occupation of Merv by the Russians. The Tékés candidly admit that they would prefer their former mode of life, but all sensible people understand that this is impossible, and in the absence of any choice all hopes are centred in peaceful development. But not all the inhabitants of Merv are sensible people; there are many who still hope for a reversion to the old order of things, and the unruly portion of the population is only restrained by the recollections of the storming of Geok-Tépé; when these shall have become somewhat obliterated there is no doubt that pillage and depredations will recommence, and the Mervees will not spare their brethren who have submitted to Russian rule.

"In view of this contingency the Akhalis do not venture to increase their flocks and to remove to any considerable distance from the line of settlements at the foot of the mountains. In the opinion of the Tékés the conquest of Merv will complete the pacification of the region; the importance attached to this point in Central Asia is so great that its possessor will be able to command the whole country as far as the mountains; the Ersars, pressed on one side by the Russians, and on the other by the Bokharians, will have to submit to the new order of things; whilst the Saryks need not be taken into account; this insignificant tribe have only hitherto been able to maintain an independent existence owing to the disorder which existed in Merv."

No. 169.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 8, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 8, 1884.

EYOUB KHAN reached Meshed on the 5th, and is now detained under a strong guard in the citadel there.

No. 170.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 9, 1884, 11·40 P.M.

"ST. PETERSBURGH GAZETTE" reports that the Merv Chiefs have submitted to Russian rule.

Have you any confirmation of this report?

No. 171.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 10, 6·10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 10, 1884, 4·24 P.M.

I HAVE no confirmation of reported submission of Merv Chiefs. Intelligence just received, dated the 3rd February, states that Chiefs had rejected Russian demand for submission and for restitution of property lately plundered from Persia.

No. 172.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, February 14.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 14, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram addressed to His Imperial Majesty by Colonel Komaroff was published in this morning's "Official Messenger," to the effect that the Khans and twenty-four Representatives of the four tribes of the Merv Turkomans had presented themselves at Askabad on the 12th instant, had sworn allegiance to the Czar, and had expressed the hope that Russia would take charge of the government of their country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 173.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, February 15.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 15, 1884.

M. DE GIERS informed me last night that His Imperial Majesty has determined to accept the allegiance which the Representatives of the Merv Turkomans had sworn at Askabad, and to send an officer to administer the Government of that region. This officer would perhaps be accompanied by an escort of Turkomans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1884).

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF ASIA.

(In continuation of "Central Asia No. 4: 1881.")

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CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1885).

TELEGRAM

FROM

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR PETER LUMSDEN

RELATIVE TO

THE FIGHT

BETWEEN THE

RUSSIANS AND THE AFGHANS AT AK TÉPÉ.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
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Telegram from Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Lumsden relative to the Fight between the Russians and the Afghans at Ak Tépé.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 21, 8·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tirpul, April* 17, 1885.

YOUR Lordship's telegram of 13th.

General Komaroff's account of attack on Penjdeh is considered incorrect:—

1. General Komaroff says:—"On 25th March one detachment approached Tash Kepri on our bank of Kushk." Reply: Tash Kepri is Turki for Pul-i-Khisti. General Komaroff's claim to either bank of Kushk is untenable. The left bank of Kushk had always been held by Afghans, and was never in Russian occupation. On 20th February Russians located an outpost of twenty-five Yulatan Turkomans at Kizil-Tépé, a mound 1 mile north of Pul-i-Khisti, and about same distance from nearest point of Kushk River, and from its junction with Murghab. This had always remained extreme limit of Russian advance within their line of vedettes. The Russian cavalry detachment alluded to did advance against Pul-i-Khisti on 25th, but retired before reaching that place when warned by Afghan Commander, as on 20th February.

2. General Komaroff states:—"Near the bridge I found an intrenchment occupied by Afghans." Reply: This position was occupied by Afghans previous to General Komaroff's advance and to the agreement mentioned in your Lordship's telegram of 17th March.

3. General Komaroff says:—"In order to avoid a conflict, I placed my troops 5 versts from Afghan position." Reply: This can only refer to main body, as Russian troops were in Kizil-Tépé, which is 1 mile from Afghan position, and the Russian vedettes were considerably in advance of that.

4. General Komaroff says that—"When Afghans had convinced themselves that we had no intention of attacking them, they began each day to come nearer to our camp." Reply: So far from Afghans being convinced of General Komaroff's innocent intentions, the continued and irritating daily attempts to excite hostility convinced Afghans of Russian determination to provoke conflict, and induced what appeared to them the military necessity of extending their defensive position.

5. General Komaroff states:—"On 27th March Afghans sent against one company, which was charged with covering a reconnaissance, three companies with a cannon and some cavalry." Reply: A reconnaissance in force itself meant hostile intention. A Russian company meant 250 men—more than equivalent to three Afghan companies aggregating 225 men. On 27th two bodies of Russian troops simultaneously advanced, Colonel Alikhanoff with cavalry pushed past Pul-i-Khisti, and Russian infantry penetrated the right flank of Afghan position on right bank of Murghab. Colonel Alikhanoff only retired when intercepted by Afghan cavalry some 4 miles in rear of Afghan position, and Russian infantry only when Afghan Commander drew up three companies and warned Russian officer that if he advanced further he would be fired upon.

General Komaroff's Chief of Staff, at interview of 29th, called Colonel Alikhanoff's advance merely a pleasure trip, but was informed that the Afghan Commander viewed it in the most serious light.

6. General Komaroff states:—"Afghan audacity and arrogance increased by degrees." Reply: It may have been so, but, if so, it was entirely caused by Russian action, as the Afghans did all they could to avoid collision, and it was solely owing to their patience and forbearance during two months of incessant irritation that peace has been preserved so long. The Afghan Commander's courteous reply of 29th to General Komaroff's ultimatum proves his wish to the last to avoid conflict.

7. General Komaroff says:—"On 28th Afghans occupied a height which commanded left flank of our camp; began to throw up intrenchments there, to establish a post of cavalry behind our line, and placed a picket at gun-shot distance from our ford." Reply: It was the case that the Afghan Commander did on 28th, after the occurrence of the hostile reconnaissance on 27th, place a post of observation on the hills on right bank of Murghab to give notice of any like fresh Russian advance on that flank, but this post was withdrawn the next day.

8. General Komaroff says:—"On 29th I sent to Afghan Commander an energetic summons, &c., and I received an answer that by the advice of the English he refused to retire across the Kushk." Reply: The fact itself is reported to me to be totally incorrect, and nowhere in the Afghan Commander's reply is any such statement. On the contrary the wording is distinct. "I have duly received your letter regarding the withdrawal of certain pickets. As I had received orders from the Governor of Herat to consult Captain Yate, who has been deputed to Penjdeh by Sir Peter Lumsden, in such matters, I showed him your letter. Captain Yate afterwards had an interview with Colonel Zakrchewski, and informed me of the conversation which had taken place between them. Be it known to ye that I must loyally obey the orders I have received from His Highness the Ameer. I can in no way do anything contrary to the orders of my Sovereign. Of course, in matters of detail, such as alterations in position of advanced pickets and vedettes posted in front of the troops, I am prepared to come to an arrangement with ye with a view to the avoidance of any risk of conflict."

9. General Komaroff says:—"I again addressed a private letter couched in friendly terms." Reply: The letter in question was never seen by any officers of the Commission, but Captain Delashoe was told that a letter had been received a few hours before Russian attack on 30th. I have now called on Sepeh Salar for copy of second letter.

10. General Komaroff states:—"On 30th, to support my demands, I marched with my detachment against the Afghan position, counting still on pacific result, but artillery fire and cavalry attack compelled me to accept combat." Reply: Russians advanced to attack of Afghan position, and of course Afghans were obliged to defend themselves. Certainly the engagement was not commenced by artillery fire as stated by General Komaroff, as infantry firing was heard continuing several minutes before the first gun.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1885).

TELEGRAM from Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Lumsden relative to the Fight between the Russians and the Afghans at Ak Tépé.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. April 1885.

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CENTRAL ASIA. No. 2 (1885).

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Further Correspondence respecting Central Asia.

[In continuation of "Central Asia No. 1 (1884)."]

No. 1.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 7. 1884.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 31, 1883.

DURING an interview which I had with M. Vlangaly on the 29th instant, his Excellency alluded to the recent invasion by an Afghan force of the Khanate of Shugnan, and informed me that he had prepared a Memorandum on the subject, which he was about to send to me. He proceeded to read this Memorandum, which was lying on his table before him, and of which I have the honour to inclose two copies.

After having done so, his Excellency stated that he had received the orders of His Majesty the Emperor to request me to transmit a copy of the Memorandum to your Lordship, and to repeat the hope expressed therein that Her Majesty's Government would exercise the influence they possessed over the Ameer of Afghanistan to induce him to cause the withdrawal from Shugnan of the Afghan force now there, and to abstain hereafter from all interference in the affairs of that Khanate.

It will be observed that with reference to the menacing attitude towards Bokhara of the authorities of Badakshan, it is stated that General Tcherniaieff had come to the conclusion that it would be necessary to invite the Khan of Badakshan to withdraw his troops from Shugnan, and to discontinue the hostile demonstrations which were being made against the Khanate of Bokhara.

From this suggestion it would appear to be implied that Badakshan is independent of the Ameer of Cabul, although in your Lordship's despatches above mentioned the contrary is maintained, and was admitted by Prince Gortchakoff in his despatch to Count Brunnow of the 19th (31st) January, 1873. Your Lordship may perhaps think it expedient that in the answer which may be given to the inclosed Memorandum the real position of Badakshan with regard to the Ameer of Afghanistan should be again expressed.

I took occasion to inquire of M. Vlangaly, whilst upon this subject, with what object a number of Russians had appeared in Wakhan, which had been admitted by Prince Gortschakoff in 1873 to be a portion of Afghanistan. It was said, I stated, that they were as many as from 400 to 500, and that it must almost be inferred that they were an armed force.

M. Vlangaly replied that he had no information of any such expedition, nor did he think there could possibly be any foundation for the report. He could assure me, he said, that no Russian force of any sort had been allowed to go into Shugnan, and none could have passed into Wakhan without crossing Shugnan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

P.S. *January* 3, 1884.—Since writing the above M. Vlangaly has informed me that he has made inquiries with regard to the report that a number of Russians had gone to Wakhan, and that the only ground for it which he could hear of was that a few Russian gentlemen had made an excursion to the Pamir plain for scientific purposes, and that they were accompanied by an escort of five Cossacks.

E. T.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Memorandum.

A LA fin du mois d'Août dernier le Cabinet Impérial de Russie a été informé par un télégramme de Taschkent que, d'après des bruits parvenus dans cette ville, le Khanat de Schougnan aurait été subitement envahi par les Afghans et que le Chef héréditaire de Schougnan, Schah Youssouf Ali Khan, ayant pris la fuite, était venu chercher un refuge dans le district de Marguelan.

Peu après un second télégramme de Taschkent apporta la nouvelle que Schah Youssouf Ali Khan, ayant voulu rentrer dans son pays, aurait été arrêté par les Afghans, et envoyé comme prisonnier à Caboul.

Ces informations furent suivies de près par des plaintes de l'Émir de Boukhara qui, se croyant lésé dans ses intérêts par les entreprises militaires des Afghans, se voyait dans la nécessité de réclamer l'intervention des autorités Russes de Turkestan pour le rétablissement du *statu quo ante*

Avant de prendre une décision quelconque à cet égard le Gouvernement Impérial crut devoir inviter le Lieutenant-Général Tcherniaieff, qui se trouvait à cette époque à St.-Pétersbourg, à recueillir, dès son retour à Taschkent, des informations plus précises. sur les événements dont la principauté de Schougnan aurait été le théâtre.

Les rapports du Général Tcherniaieff viennent de confirmer l'exactitude des renseignements ci-dessus exposés. Il en résulte que les possessions de Schah Youssouf Khan ont en effet été envahies par un corps Afghan venu de Badakhschan, dont le chef a en outre envoyé à Schougnan un Lieutenant chargé d'administrer cette Principauté en son nom, et que les changements qui en sont résultés sur la frontière sud du Boukhara sont de nature à menacer la sécurité des États de l'Émir Mazaffered-din. Le Gouverneur-Général du Turkestan ajoute à ce qui précède que les autorités de Badakhschan auraient pris depuis quelque temps une attitude menaçante à l'égard du Boukhara, que des barques armées Afghanes circulaient à l'heure qu'il est sur l'Amou-Daria, qu'un corps de cavalerie Afghan aurait été réuni sur la rive gauche du fleuve, et que des cavaliers auraient même à plus d'une reprise franchi l'Amou-Daria. Le Général Tcherniaieff est d'avis que cet état de choses ne saurait tarder à provoquer des complications regrettables dans ces parages, et il en conclut à la nécessité d'inviter le Khan de Badakhschan à faire retirer ses troupes de Schougnan et à couper court aux démonstrations hostiles dont le Khanat de Boukhara est l'objectif.

Le Cabinet Impérial se voit dans l'impossibilité de méconnaître la justesse de ces appréciations.

La Principauté de Schougnan et de Roschan qui est limitrophe non seulement du Boukhara, mais aussi de la province Russe du Fergana, a de tout temps joui d'une existence indépendante et, bien qu'elle n'ait pu échapper aux conséquences des révolutions dont cette partie de l'Asie Centrale a été autrefois le théâtre, elle n'a pas cessé d'être administrée par des Chefs indigènes. Elle ne figure pas non plus au nombre des provinces qui, conformément à l'arrangement intervenu en 1873 entre la Russie et l'Angleterre, sont reconnus comme faisant partie des États de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan, et cette circonstance prouve mieux que tout le reste que l'envahissement de Schougnan par le Khan de Badakhschan constitue un acte arbitraire en contradiction flagrante avec les termes de l'arrangement en question, et qui pourraient devenir le point de départ de malentendus et de complications entre le Boukhara et l'Afghanistan.

Animé du désir de prévenir ces complications le Cabinet Impérial est fermement persuadé que, de son côté, la Grande-Bretagne ne saurait rester indifférente en présence de faits qui tendent à miner les bases de l'arrangement qui s'est établi en 1873 entre les deux États et qui a le plus contribué au maintien, durant une période de dix ans, de la tranquillité dans cette partie de l'Asie Centrale. Dans cet état de cause le Cabinet Impérial se plaît à espérer que, conformément aux termes de l'arrangement en question le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine s'empressera d'user de toute son influence sur l'Émir de Caboul afin de l'engager à faire retirer le plus tôt possible de Schougnan et de Roschan le Lieutenant et la garnison Afghans qui s'y trouvent actuellement, et à renoncer à tout jamais à toute ingérence dans les affaires de la susdite Principauté.

(Translation.)

AT the end of the month of August last the Imperial Cabinet of Russia was informed by a telegram from Tashkend that, according to rumours current at that place, the Khanat of Shignan had been suddenly invaded by the Afghans, and that the hereditary Chief of

Shignan, Shah Youssouf Ali Khan, had taken flight and had sought refuge in the district of Marguelan.

Shortly afterwards a second telegram from Tashkend brought the news that Shah Youssouf Ali Khan in the attempt to return to his country had been arrested by the Afghans, and sent a prisoner to Cabul.

This information was closely followed by the complaints of the Ameer of Bokhara, who, thinking that his interests were suffering from the military enterprises of the Afghans, found himself obliged to seek the intervention of the Russian authorities of Turkestan in order to re-establish the *status quo ante*.

Before coming to any conclusion on this point the Imperial Government decided to order Lieutenant-General Tchernaieff, at that time in St. Petersburgh, to collect information on his return to Tashkend upon the events of which the Principality of Shignan was said to have been the scene.

The reports of General Tchernaieff have just confirmed the correctness of the information given above. They prove that the possessions of Shah Youssouf Khan have in fact been invaded by an Afghan troop from Badakshan, whose Chief in addition sent to Shignan a Lieutenant charged with the administration of that Principality in his name, and that the changes which have resulted from the frontier south of Bokhara are of a nature to threaten the security of the States of Ameer Mazaffered-din. The Governor-General of Turkestan adds that the authorities of Badakshan have for some time adopted a threatening attitude towards Bokhara, that armed Afghan vessels at this moment navigate the Amou-Daria, that a corps of Afghan cavalry have been assembled on the left bank of the river, and that horsemen have even constantly crossed it. General Tchernaieff is of opinion that this state of things will before long certainly provoke unfortunate complications in that neighbourhood, and finally insists on the necessity of requesting the Khan of Badakshan to withdraw his troops from Shignan, and cease the hostile demonstrations directed against the Khanate of Bokhara.

The Imperial Cabinet finds it impossible to deny the justice of these views.

The Principality of Shignan and Roshan, which is contiguous not only to Bokhara, but also to the Russian Province of Fergana, has always enjoyed an independent existence, and although it has not escaped the consequences of the revolution of which this part of Central Asia was once the scene, it has never ceased to be administered by native Rulers. On the other hand, it is not among the number of those provinces which were recognized by the arrangement arrived at in 1873 between Russia and England as forming part of the possessions of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and this circumstance is the best proof that the invasion of Shignan by the Khan of Badakshan is an arbitrary act in flagrant violation of the terms of the arrangement in question, and that it might give rise to misunderstandings and complications between Bokhara and Afghanistan.

Themselves desirous of preventing such complications, the Imperial Cabinet are firmly convinced that Great Britain on her side will not remain indifferent to a state of affairs which threatens the bases of the arrangement established in 1873 between the two States, an arrangement which has greatly contributed to the maintenance of peace for a period of ten years in this part of Central Asia. Under these circumstances, the Imperial Cabinet hope that in conformity with the terms of the arrangement in question the Government of Her Majesty the Queen will employ all their influence to induce the Ameer of Cabul to withdraw as soon as possible, from Shignan and Roshan, the Lieutenant and the Afghan garrison now in that Principality, and to renounce for ever all interference in its affairs.

No. 2.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 10, 1884.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 31st ultimo, inclosing a Memorandum from the Russian Government on the subject of the proceedings of Afghan troops in Shugnan, and I have to request your Excellency to inform the Russian Government that inquiries are being made into the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 3.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February 14, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the official Gazette of to-day publishes a telegram sent to His Imperial Majesty by General Komaroff, Chief of the Transcaspian region, under date of the 31st January, 1884, of which the following is a translation by Mr. Michell:—

"I have the honour of reporting to your Majesty that the Khans of the four tribes of Merv Turkomans and twenty-four Deputies, each representing 2,000 Kibitkas, have this day at Askhabad formally taken the oath of allegiance to your Majesty for themselves and on behalf of all the people of Merv. The Khans and Representatives state that the Mervees have decided on this step, being conscious of their inability to govern themselves, and convinced that your Majesty's powerful Government alone is capable of establishing and consolidating order and prosperity in Merv.

(Signed) "General KOMAROFF,
"*Chief of the Transcaspian Region.*"

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 4.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February 15, 1884.*

WITH reference to my despatch of yesterday, I have the honour to state that M. de Giers, whom I met last night, informed me that the Emperor has determined to accept the allegiance of the Merv Turkomans, and will send a Russian officer to Merv for the purpose of administering the Government of that region and of establishing order therein. This officer, his Excellency said, might perhaps be accompanied by a small escort, probably of natives, but that he hoped it would not be necessary, for the present at least, to send any Russian troops in that direction.

I inclose an article published in this morning's "Journal de St.-Pétersbourg," which M. de Giers informed me had been inspired by his Office, and represented the views of the Government with regard to the situation at Merv.

I had seen M. de Giers at the Foreign Office on the 13th instant; he had then made no mention of the telegram which had been received from Askhabad. Last night his Excellency assured me that it was not till an hour after I left him that His Imperial Majesty had sent him the telegram in question, and he expressed his hope that I would not believe that he had purposely concealed its contents from me. He added that, though he had for some time expected that Russia would have to undertake the pacification of the Merv district, he had been quite unprepared for so early a declaration of the feelings of the Turkoman tribes in Merv. He hoped, however, that the steps which would now be taken would be to the advantage of the whole of that country, by establishing order and good government, and of the neighbours Afghanistan and Persia, in preventing a continuation of the raids which had lately been so frequent, and of which the Government of the latter had recently made serious complaints, calling upon the Imperial Government to prevent them. His Excellency expressed his hope that Her Majesty's Government would view the measures which were now about to be taken as being adopted only in the cause of peace and good order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," of February 3 (15), 1884.

ON a lu plus haut le télégramme du Général Komarow publié par le "Messager Officiel."

La résolution des tribus Merviennes qui y est rapportée était prévue depuis quelque

temps. Des télégrammes privés de Téhéran l'avaient fait pressentir à Londres. Voici ce que le " Times " du 8 Février disait à ce sujet :—

" La nouvelle ayant trait à la conclusion d'un arrangement définitif avec la plus grande partie des tribus Turcomanes, aux termes duquel l'autorité du Grand Tsar Blanc de Russie est reconnue par les habitants de Merve, a été reçue à Londres, dit le 'Times,' avec une indifférence que l'on n'aurait pas crue possible il y a quelques années. Le fait est que depuis la prise de Ghéok-Tépé le Gouvernement Anglais s'est rendu compte de la véritable importance de la possession de Merve par la Russie et qu'il est prêt pour le moment à accepter ce fait avec une certaine complaisance, d'autant plus que les hommes d'Etat de Russie ont toujours déclaré que la possession de Merve était souhaitée, parce que cette ville leur procurerait la meilleure ligne de communication entre le Turkestan et la Mer Caspienne, et qu'une fois ce but atteint leur rôle de conquête dans l'Asie Centrale toucherait à sa fin.

" La cause immédiate de la décision qui vient d'être prise par les Chefs de la ville de Merve doit être attribuée sans doute pour la plus grande partie à l'effet produit sur la députation Turcomane qui a assisté aux fêtes du Couronnement du Tsar à Moscou. Les récits qu'ils ont faits à leurs compatriotes de la Puissance et de la richesse de la Russie a dû vivement impressioner ces enfants primitifs du désert, et c'est à cela qu'il faut attribuer la promptitude avec laquelle ils ont accepté les bons offices que le Khan de Khiva leur a proposés en vue du réglement de leurs rapports avec la Russie.

" Une faible partie des tribus a refusé d'acquiescer à cet arrangement et s'est dirigée dans le district de Sarik prête à fuir plus loin encore à l'approche de toute expédition Russe. C'est précisément cette petite troupe de Turcomans qui a causé récemment des désordres sur la frontière de la Perse. La première conséquence de la soumission de Merve a donc été de jeter sur les frontières de la Perse et de l'Afghanistan des bandes de maraudeurs déterminés et prêts à tout en désespoir de cause, et cela prouve que les deux voisins immédiats de la Russie ont raison de s'intéresser vivement à l'arrangement qui vient d'être conclu; la possession de Merve nécessitera dans le délai le plus court une délimitation claire et définitive des nouvelles frontières et une définition précise des responsabilités contractées des deux parts.

" Une des premières questions à régler est celle des communications de la Russie avec Merve. Au nord la route de Tcherdjui ou de Khiva ne présentera pas de danger si les Turcomans tiennent leur promesse, mais il en est tout autrement du côté de la Province Transcaspienne. Les Russes ont fixé la limite de leur autorité directe à 50 milles à l'est d'Askhabad, mais en réalité ils ont étendu depuis quelque temps leur pouvoir sur tout le pays jusqu'à la Rivière de Tejend. Par un trait de plume la route est ouverte maintenant, non seulement pour les voyageurs, mais pour leurs officiers sans déguisement aucun et pour leurs caravanes depuis le Tejend jusqu'à l'Oxus. Mais les Russes, pour pouvoir se servir efficacement de cette route, peuvent émettre le désir de posséder des districts qui apartiennent incontestablement à la Perse—comme par exemple la position stratégique importante de Serakhs. Ils pourront certainement construire un chemin de fer jusqu'à Merve en continuant celui qu'ils ont déjà établi à une certaine distance au delà de la Mer Caspienne en le faisant passer par Artuk et sans toucher à Serakhs; mais ils n'en conserveront pas moins un violent désir de posséder Serakhs, soit par voie d'occupation directe, soit à la suite d'une entente amicale avec le Schah.

" Si pareille demande venait à être faite, il serait nécessaire, tout en montrant toute la disposition voulue pour reconnaître les vues et les besoins du Gouvernement Russe, d'insister sur le fait qu'il y a d'autres intérêts à prendre en considération, et nommément ceux de la Perse. La possession de Merve par les Russes, il y a buelques années de cela, aurait eu pour conséquence des menaces de guerre; le calme actuel du peuple et du Gouvernement Anglais à cet égard ne doit pas être considéré toutefois comme de l'indifférence. Nous acceptons ce qui est inévitable dans la question de Merve ou dans toute autre, mais si nous agissons ainsi, c'est avec la résolution de montrer encore plus de fermeté dans toutes les questions qui en seront la conséquence. L'occupation de Merve ne doit pas augmenter la force offensive de la Russie et elle doit être suivie d'un arrangement diplomatique qui remplacera par quelque chose de claire et sans équivoque tout le vague d'une situation qui est en grande partie la création d'une opinion individuelle et flottante."

On voit d'après cela combien l'opinion publique Anglaise, surtout celle des gens sérieux et compétents, est revenue des anciennes préventions qui avaient fait du nom même de Merve une espèce d'épouvantail d'autant plus exagéré que cette localité, sa position, et sa valeur militaire et politique étaient parfaitement inconnues. Déjà l'année dernière, des voix très compétentes s'étaient élevées dans la Société Géographique de Londres, pour démontrer qu'après la chute de Ghéok-Tépé et l'annexion d'Askhabad,

Merve n'avait plus du tout l'importance qu'on y attribuait en d'autres temps. Le "Times" reconnaît aujourd'hui que la soumission des Merviens est la conséquence naturelle et inévitable de cet état de choses.

On ne peut que se féliciter de ces appréciations calmes, justes et saines du public Anglais dans l'intérêt des relations amicales que les deux Gouvernements désirent maintenir dans ces contrées pour leur mutuel avantage.

Nous n'ajouterons que quelques observations à l'article du "Times."

Le Gouvernement Russe, en se décidant à s'établir fortement dans la steppe Turcomane, a assumé la tâche d'y mettre un terme aux brigandages qui la désolaient, et d'y faire régner l'ordre et la sécurité afin d'ouvrir les voies au commerce et à la civilisation. Toutefois, il aurait hésité à poursuivre la barbarie Turcomane en faisant tomber par la force son dernier refuge à Merve, afin de ne point provoquer des défiances ou des malentendus de la part du Gouvernement Anglais. Mais du moment où la force des choses amène ces tribus belliqueuses à reconnaître l'impossibilité de continuer leur existence aventureuse et la nécessité de se soumettre à l'autorité de la Russie, la Russie ne pouvait évidemment pas repousser cette solution pacifique.

Quant aux conséquences possibles de cette solution, que le "Times" semble envisager avec une certaine appréhension, elles ne reposent pas sur des données tout à fait exactes.

Si le Gouvernement Russe désire d'établir des communications directes d'Askhabad par le pays de Merve avec le Turkestan—ce qui serait très naturel vu les difficultés et la longueur des communications par le nord de la steppe—il n'aurait pas besoin de passer par le territoire Persan, dont l'Atrek ne fait point partie. Ce qui le prouve suffisamment c'est que l'Attek a toujours été le lieu de refuge d'où sont parties les agressions Turcomanes qui ravageaient périodiquement le Khorassan, que c'est par l'Atrek que sont passées les bandes qui sont venues secourir les Tékés dans la défense de Ghéok-Tépé contre nos troupes, et qu'enfin l'autorité Russe a dû se charger de repousser et de réprimer tout récemment ces incursions justement redoutées des Persans. Mais il n'y a pas lieu de supposer que la Russie ait jamais besoin d'occuper Serakhs, auquel le "Times" attribue une si grande importance stratégique et politique. Quant à la Perse, le Gouvernement Russe n'a pas moins à cœur les intérêts de ce pays, qu'il considère comme solidaires avec les siens, et le "Times" peut être parfaitement assuré que son sincère désir est de baser les relations réciproques de la Russie et de l'Angleterre sur une appréciation mutuellement équitable des intérêts des deux pays.

Nous avons toujours soutenu que ces intérêts sont parfaitement conciliables, et que la Russie et l'Angleterre n'ont aucun motif pour se nuire l'une à l'autre dans ces contrées, tandis qu'elles ont toutes les deux avantage à s'entendre afin de poursuivre d'un commun accord leur mission civilisatrice.

Nous persistons dans cette conviction, et nous sommes persuadés qu'il ne dépend que de la sagesse du Gouvernement Anglais de réaliser ce programme pacifique.

No. 5.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 28, 1884.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and told me that he had received a despatch from his Government instructing him as to the language which he was to use in explaining what had recently happened in regard to Merv. M. de Mohrenheim added that, not having lately had an opportunity of conversing with me, he thought it best to let me see the despatch itself, and he accordingly gave it to me to read.

The despatch describes the acceptance by Russia of the submission of the Turkomans of Merv as an act of local administration, brought about by the force of circumstances, without any political premeditation on the part of Russia.

These tribes, it is stated, could no longer have continued their life of brigandage without exposing themselves to severe measures of repression. As they were obliged to abandon their practices in order to live at peace with the Russian authorities, they prepared to secure the advantages of protection from a regular Government rather than to remain in a condition of anarchy, of which the advantages were for the future denied to them and which the Russian authorities were bound to repress. The Russian Government, on the other hand, could not reject their petition without compromising the tranquillity of the countries bordering on their own possessions.

In all this there was no hostile combination against England, nor any intention

to take advantage of the present embarrassments of Her Majesty's Government elsewhere.

Baron Mohrenheim was instructed to assure me that the views of the Emperor as regards the relations between the two countries in Central Asia were in no way changed, and that it was His Majesty's desire that these relations should continue to be marked by a spirit of friendly sincerity and an equitable appreciation of our mutual interests.

I told Baron Mohrenheim that we had been informed by your Excellency of the facts, and that at this moment a draft was being submitted to my colleagues on the subject. I could not pretend that the news had produced no effect on our minds. Assurances had constantly been given, not only by the Russian Government, but by the Emperor himself, on the subject of Merv—assurances which seemed to put out of the question, at all events for the present and under existing circumstances, any annexation of Merv.

I fully admitted that there were qualifications of those assurances, and that the Russian Government did not give up their liberty of action in regard to Merv for all time and under all circumstances. But we were not aware of any change of circumstances which might not have been anticipated at the time when the assurances were given; and, even if the facts had been of that nature, there was some occasion for surprise, when two Governments have for a long time been exchanging communications and explanations upon a subject, if one of them suddenly acted in a sense opposite to its assurances without any previous communication with the Power with whom it had carried on this friendly exchange of ideas.

The Russian Ambassador stated that the assurances of the Emperor and of the Russian Government had been given in perfect good faith; that his Government had never the slightest intention of conquering Merv, though it might have been necessary to inflict occasional chastisements on the depredating Turkomans of that district, but that no permanent occupation was contemplated. But the state of things had entirely changed; the Chiefs had suddenly asked for the Protectorate of Russia. This Protectorate was a measure which would add to the heavy expenses of Russia in those regions, but, with a view to tranquillity in the surrounding countries, it would be a great advantage.

His Excellency alluded to the great difficulty which both Russian and English statesmen had always acknowledged to exist for a civilized Power to stop short in the extension of its territory where uncivilized tribes were its immediate neighbours, and said that there was nothing in the present extension of Russian authority which could be of disadvantage to us.

I told him that, as he had broached the subject, I had thought it fair to let him know that the news had not been received by us with indifference. I added that I was about to send to St. Petersburgh the expression of our views, and that it, perhaps, would be better that we should not anticipate that communication by further verbal discussion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 6.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 29, 1884.

I HAVE received and have laid before the Queen your Excellency's despatch of the 15th instant, reporting that M. de Giers had informed you that the Emperor of Russia had determined to accept the allegiance of the Merv Turkomans, and would send a Russian officer to Merv for the purpose of administering the Government of that region and of establishing order therein; that the officer in question might perhaps be accompanied by a small escort, probably of natives, but that the Russian Government hoped that it would not be necessary, for the present at least, to send any Russian troops in that direction.

A similar announcement which has appeared in the newspapers has excited much attention in the public mind in England, and has formed the subject of a debate that took place on the 22nd instant in the House of Commons.

The views entertained by Her Majesty's present Government and by their predecessors in office in regard to the extension of Russian sovereignty over Merv are so well known to your Excellency and to the Government of the Emperor, that it is hardly necessary that I should repeat them here. But it may be convenient to recapitulate the

communications which have passed between the Governments of England and Russia on the subject since the conclusion of the Treaty with Khiva in 1873 called attention to the possibility of an eventual advance of Russia to Merv.

On the 7th January, 1874, I addressed a despatch to Lord A. Loftus, expressing the views of Her Majesty's Government upon the Russian proceedings in Central Asia. I said that the apprehensions of the Ameer of Afghanistan had been especially roused by the reported intention to send a Russian expedition to capture Merv and reduce the Turkoman tribes in those parts. Rumours of such an expedition had reached Her Majesty's Government, and though it might be discountenanced and disavowed by the Government of St. Petersburgh, it would be unwise, in the face of previous events, not to contemplate the possibility that considerations of self-defence or the necessity of punishing acts of plunder and hostility might eventually give occasion for such an expedition. The Ameer, fearing that the result would be to drive the Turkomans to take refuge in the neighbourhood of Herat, which might bring him into collision with the Russian authorities, had applied for advice to the Government of India. The Viceroy had endeavoured to reassure him as to the safety of his territories, but Her Majesty's Government thought it best to bring the Ameer's fears to the knowledge of the Russian Government, and to express their earnest hope that the question of any further expedition against the Turkoman tribes might be carefully considered in conjunction with the results which the Ameer apprehended might ensue from it.

Prince Gortchakoff's reply upon this point, contained in a despatch of the 21st January (o.s.) to Count Brunnow, was as follows:—

"As regards the eventual danger pointed out to us by Lord Granville, and to which Shere Ali appears already to have called the attention of the Government of India, namely, that nomad tribes of Turkomans driven off by our troops may return to seek assistance or refuge on the territory of Herat, and may bring about a conflict between us and Afghanistan, I have told Lord A. Loftus that we had no intention of undertaking an expedition against the Turkomans; it depended entirely on them to live on good terms with us, and even to derive profit from our proximity and from the outlets which we are endeavouring to make for peaceful commerce; but if these turbulent tribes were to take to attacking or plundering us we should be compelled to punish them. This is a necessity which Her Majesty's Government know from their own experience, and which no Government in contact with wild populations can avoid. We are in any case the first to wish that this punishment, if it becomes necessary, should be inflicted as near as possible to our own frontier.

"Lord A. Loftus has received the same assurances from the mouth of our august Master, and has doubtless reported them to his Government.

"I added that, although the eventuality pointed out by Shere Ali is scarcely probable, the Ameer of Cabul can assist in removing the possibility of it by making the Turkomans understand clearly beforehand that if they provoke rigorous measures by acts of depredation against us they cannot count upon any assistance or protection from him."

A change of Government took place in February 1874, and on the 13th April of the same year Count Brunnow communicated to Lord Derby a letter from Prince Gortchakoff to the effect that the orders of the Emperor, that no expedition should be undertaken against the Téké Turkomans, which meant in the direction of Merv, had been given in such peremptory terms that no local ambition would dare to take the liberty of transgressing them.

On the 12th March, 1875, Count Schouvaloff, who inquired whether there was any inclination on the part of England to advance further in the direction of the Russian possessions, was informed by Lord Derby that the only case in which he could conceive such an advance as probable was in the event of any Russian movement tending to the occupation of Merv; he reminded his Excellency of the great importance which the Indian Government attached to that place, and of the danger to good relations that would ensue if it were meddled with.

On the 11th May Count Schouvaloff communicated a note from Prince Gortchakoff, dated the 5th April, which contained a positive assurance that the Emperor had no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia such as they existed at that time in Central Asia, either on the side of Bokhara or on the side of Krasnovodsk and the Attrek. This note was, however, accompanied by a Memorandum reviewing the correspondence which had passed on the subject with Her Majesty's Government, explaining the successive Russian advances, and claiming complete liberty of action over the territory between the Russian frontiers and Afghanistan.

In a Memorandum in reply, which was forwarded to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires

at St. Petersburgh on the 25th October, Lord Derby stated that Her Majesty's Government fully accepted the assurances of the Imperial Cabinet as to the extension of the southern frontiers of Russian territory, but they equally admitted the force of the arguments which had been advanced to explain the repeated annexations which, in spite of those assurances, had taken place.

However sincere, therefore, the desire of the Russian Government to avoid future extension of territorial responsibilities, Her Majesty's Government could not regard the line of the Russian frontier as fixed and immovable. The recurrence of similar causes might lead to similar results, and Her Majesty's Government could not regard with indifference, and as a matter with which they had no concern, further occupation and absorption by Russia of the regions which still separated Afghanistan from the Russian territory. Regarding the maintenance of the integrity of Afghanistan as an object of the highest importance, they must reserve to themselves the most complete liberty of action under all future contingencies as to the measures which might, in their opinion, be necessary to secure it. They could not but feel that such an event as the occupation of Merv, which would bring the line of Russian territory into direct contact with Afghan territory, would arouse the susceptibilities of the Ameer to the highest degree, and possibly involve him in a common cause of defensive action with the Turkoman tribes on his borders. This might lead to complications which would eventually bring about the very result which both Governments desired to avert, viz., the contact of the two Powers in Central Asia. The Memorandum concluded by expressing the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government had received Prince Gortchakoff's assurances as to the Emperor's conviction that the extension of Russian territory towards the Afghan borders was contrary to Russian interests, and that formal orders had been given that all future action in those regions was to be strictly confined to the defence of existing limits and the protection of property and commerce from pillage and brigandage.

This Memorandum was formally replied to by the Russian Government in a despatch to Count Schouvaloff of the 3rd February, 1876 (o. s.), which, without going into details, reiterated the declaration that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of Russia's action, and stated that the two Cabinets, while retaining entire freedom of action, should be guided by a mutual desire to pay due regard to their respective interests and necessities by avoiding, as far as possible, any immediate contact with each other, and any collisions between the Asiatic States placed within the circle of their influence.

The movements in the summer of 1875 of General Lomakin, who was engaged in a military reconnaissance of the Turkoman steppe, had led to renewed rumours of an intended expedition to Merv, and accordingly, on the 3rd August, Mr. Doria, Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburgh, mentioned the subject to Baron Jomini, whose language led Mr. Doria to believe that there was no foundation for the report, and his Excellency referred to the orders of the Emperor against any attack on Merv.

In the autumn of 1876 General Lomakin left Krasnovodsk on a fresh reconnaissance, and the report of an expedition to Merv was revived; but Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh wrote, on the 15th November, that Prince Gortchakoff had charged him to inform Lord Derby that there was no question of such an expedition or of occupying the place.

In view, however, of the General's operations against the Téké Turkomans in 1877 Lord Derby wrote to Lord A. Loftus, on the 13th June of that year, that they might ultimately end in the occupation of Merv unless positive instructions to the contrary were at once issued by the Russian Government. He therefore instructed his Excellency to make a renewed representation to the Russian Government on the subject of the movements of the Russian troops, to recall to Prince Gortchakoff his observation of the 15th November, and to point out clearly, but courteously, that the occupation of Merv would be held by the general opinion of the inhabitants of the neighbouring regions of Asia to announce a design on the part of the Emperor to extend his influence, if not his dominions, into territories with which Her Majesty's Government understood that it was not his intention to interfere. Such an impression might impose upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of making a corresponding advance, and they hoped, therefore, that His Majesty would issue stringent injunctions to his officers in those countries to abstain from advancing into the neighbourhood of Merv.

On the 18th July (o. s.) M. de Giers replied, in a despatch to Count Schouvaloff, which was, however, not communicated until after the lapse of several months, that the sole object of the expedition was to punish some Turkoman hordes quite distinct from the Tékés of Merv; that the most formal orders had been given to the Commandant of the column not to exceed instructions, which were merely to keep order on the frontier, and

that in presence of these frank explanations any anxiety respecting Merv must fall to the ground.

In the spring of 1879 an expedition under General Lazareff left the eastern shore of the Caspian, the sole object of which, as Count Schouvaloff assured Lord Salisbury on the 16th May, was to effect a land communication, by means of fortified posts, between Krasnovodsk and Chikishlar. Lord Salisbury informed him that there were two points of view from which any such expedition might meet with objections on the part of England. "Her Majesty's Government," he said, "would take exception to any operations by which Merv was menaced," and would "object to any encroachments upon Persian territory." Count Schouvaloff replied that there was no intention of menacing Merv or advancing nearer to it than a point 160 miles distant, and that Her Majesty's Government might rest assured that no infringement of Persia's rights was probable. His Excellency added, however, that this conversation was unofficial.

But on the 9th July M. de Giers assured Lord Dufferin most positively that there was no intention on the part of the Russian Government to go to Merv, and in a conversation on the same subject with Baron Jomini, the latter informed Her Majesty's Ambassador that the Russian advance was intended to stop at a point 150 miles upon this side of it. He added, "Although we do not intend to go to Merv, or to do anything which may be interpreted as a menace to England, you must not deceive yourself, for the result of our present proceedings will be to furnish us with a base of operations against England hereafter, should the British Government, by the occupation of Herat, threaten our position in Central Asia."

Simultaneously, Lord Salisbury received similar assurances from Count Schouvaloff, who stated that he had informed his Government of the intimation that Her Majesty's Government could not look without dissatisfaction upon any operation which would have the effect of either threatening Merv or encroaching upon Persian territory, and he could only repeat the assurance that no design involving either result was entertained by the Imperial Government.

On the 30th July Lord Dufferin reported that M. de Giers had informed him that the Emperor had expressly approved the assurances he had given as to the non-advance of the Russian troops on Merv, and on the 12th August the Emperor personally confirmed to Lord Dufferin the Minister's statement.

When, however, Mr. Stanhope, Under-Secretary of State for India, said in Parliament that Her Majesty's Government held the solemn promise of the Russian Government that it was not their intention to march as far as Merv, M. de Giers informed Lord Dufferin on the 15th August that he considered this language went too far; that although he had told the Ambassador and had authorized Count Schouvaloff to assure Lord Salisbury that an advance on Merv was not contemplated by the Russian Government, and formed no part of the existing programme, he did not mean to imply by his former remarks that under different circumstances, and in view of unforeseen contingencies, the occupation of Merv might not become necessary; that, in fact, the Russian Government had never intended by a solemn pledge given for all time to preclude themselves from ever going to Merv.

Lord Dufferin replied that he hoped these observations were not intended to impair the *bonâ fide* character of previous Ministerial assurances, or to imply a modification of those given by the Emperor. M. de Giers said that he did not desire his remarks to be so interpreted, and that the Ambassador might be satisfied Merv was in no sense the object of General Lazareff's expedition.

The repulse of the Russians at Geok-Tépé in September 1879 led to the organization in the following year of an expedition on a still more considerable scale, and the command was intrusted to General Skobeleff.

On the 21st December, 1879, M. de Giers admitted to Lord Dufferin that preparations for this expedition were on foot, but that it was undertaken with much repugnance by Russia. He incidentally mentioned a report that the Merv Turkomans had joined with the Tékés against the Russian troops, and said that it might become necessary to destroy the place, though he added that there could be no intention that any Russian troops should remain there.

Nevertheless, an impression prevailed that the ultimate destination of the expedition was Merv, and in August 1880 Lord Dufferin again mentioned the subject to M. de Giers, who replied that so far as General Skobeleff's present plans were concerned there was no change of intention, and he most emphatically denied that Merv was the object of the expedition.

After General Skobeleff's victory at Geok-Tépé in January 1881, M. de Giers observed to Lord Dufferin that the time had come for the Russian Government to show its mode-

ration, and to take care not to allow itself to be entangled in further military operations in that quarter of the world, and these remarks were afterwards expressly approved by the Emperor.

In connection with a report which was immediately circulated, and turned out afterwards to be well founded, that General Skobeleff might advance to Askabad, 50 miles beyond Geok-Tépé, Lord Dufferin was assured, both by M. de Giers and General Miliutine, that, even in such an event, the policy of the Russian Government would be confined to the subjugation of the Akhal Téké Oasis, and that an attack upon Merv was quite outside of any possible programme.

On the 7th February the Russian Ambassador, Prince Lobanow, showed me a despatch from his Government, written in the previous April, which contained some observations as to the scope and objects of the expedition against the Turkomans. It stated that, in the opinion of the Russian Government, the importance of Merv had been much exaggerated; that they could not pledge themselves as to the exact limits within which their military operations would be confined; that they had no desire to push them as far as Merv, but if they found themselves compelled to do so, they certainly did not contemplate a permanent occupation, and would withdraw as soon as possible.

I replied that I noted the date of the despatch; otherwise it would have struck me that the information given did not go so far as the speech recently made by M. de Giers to Lord Dufferin, and already quoted.

Upon this, Lord Dufferin wrote on the 16th February that he considered the personal assurance given to him by the Emperor himself, to the effect that there was no intention on the part of Russia of advancing to Merv, as still extant and in full force, and as never having been since qualified or withdrawn by His Majesty or any of his Ministers. He had taken care from time to time to remind M. de Giers that this was the sense in which he continued to regard His Majesty's communication.

Shortly afterwards, however, M. de Giers, whilst contradicting a report in the "Times of India," that Russia was about to occupy Merv, told Lord Dufferin that the murder of two Russians by Merv Turkomans, and the intrigues of the English at the place itself, made it uncertain what would have to be done; and upon Lord Dufferin referring to the assurances he had so lately received, remarked that those assurances merely consisted in the statement that the Russian Government at the time they were given had no intention of going to Merv. Lord Dufferin replied that although the word "intention" was undoubtedly to be found in some of the phrases made use of, the general purport of his repeated conversations with himself and with General Miliutine amounted to a serious *bonâ fide* and unambiguous declaration on the part of the Russian Government that Merv was not to be attacked; that when the Emperor had deigned on two occasions to give him similar assurances His Majesty had made use of the most unequivocal language, and an intimation of this kind, proceeding from so august a source, possessed a direct and abiding force which of necessity endured until it was formally retracted. Fortified by these considerations, and impressed by the sincerity and earnestness of his Excellency's repeated asseverations upon this point, he had led his Government to consider the matter as having been placed beyond doubt, and he hardly saw in what language he could convey to me any intimation to a contrary effect. At all events, if the announcements which had been so frequently made to him, and which he had been requested to repeat to London, were to be annulled, he should expect the fact to be conveyed to him, not by hints and doubtful innuendoes, but in terms absolutely clear and explicit.

On this M. de Giers reasserted his anxious desire to make the Russian policy in Central Asia conform to the programme he had described to Lord Dufferin as the one which recommended itself to his own judgment.

A few days later Lord Dufferin called on M. de Giers, who informed him that the Emperor had again authorized him to say that there was no question of an advance on Merv. "Not only we do not want to go there," said M. de Giers, "but happily there is nothing which can require us to go there. But," he added, "the Emperor trusts that you, upon your part, will render a policy of abstention and moderation possible to us by not permitting English officers to haunt the oases and stir up the Turkoman population against us."

This remark referred to the proceedings of Captain Gill and Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, but there was no foundation for the insinuation, for Captain Gill had been prevented by Her Majesty's Government from visiting the Turkoman country, and Colonel Stewart was known not to have extended his journey beyond the Persian district of Dereghez.

The arrival at Askabad of a deputation from Merv, and the reported dispatch of

Russian Agents thither, formed the subject of representations by Lord Dufferin to M. de Giers on the 30th March and the 15th April; M. de Giers replies were that in any event there was no question of the acquisition of the country, of which General Skobeleff's proximate return was a proof; and again, that the circumstances certainly did not imply the acquisition of any sovereignty over the Merv Turkomans by the Czar, and that Russia had no desire to acquire the Merv oasis.

On the 24th May an Imperial Ukase announced the annexation to the Empire of the territory of the Téké Turkomans occupied by the Russian troops, but Her Majesty's Government failed during the summer to elicit from the Russian Government any statement of what the frontiers of these territories were.

In December 1881 a Convention was signed between Russia and Persia relative to the Turkoman frontier as far as Baba Dormuz, and since that date communications have passed between Her Majesty's Government and Russia with a view to the settlement of the frontier still left undefined between Persia and the Turkoman country beyond that point to the frontier of Afghanistan, but our proposals have been met by the reply that the matter concerned Russia and Persia exclusively.

The Russian Government has, however, expressed itself in favour of the definition of the Afghan boundary up to the Persian frontier.

During these discussions M. de Giers has assured your Excellency that Russia had no intention whatever at present of advancing towards Merv, or of occupying any territory in that region beyond what was already in her possession. He would, however, object to the assertion by Persia of any rights over the district of Merv, and such a move might force the Russian authorities to adopt more vigorous measures.

In April 1882 your Excellency mentioned to M. de Giers a report that some Russian cavalry had gone towards Merv. M. de Giers replied that they had merely gone as an escort to a caravan of Russian merchants, and that the most stringent orders had been given to General Röhrberg to avoid as far as possible sending any troops beyond the limits of the territory then held by the Russian forces.

During a conversation with your Excellency on the 24th October last M. de Giers admitted that General Tchernaieff employed a certain moral influence over the independent Turkomans in the interest of peace. He said that the different tribes at Merv were constantly quarrelling amongst themselves, and had been recommended to submit to the authority of the Khan of Khiva; the greater number had consented to be governed by the person named by the Khan. This, M. de Giers insisted, was the extent of Russian intervention.

On the 10th November a note appeared in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," in reply to an article in the French "Agence Havas," denying the intention of Russia to go to Merv, but repudiating any pretension on the part of Persia to occupy that territory.

The foregoing summary shows that up to the 15th February last, the day on which M. de Giers announced to your Excellency that the Emperor had determined to accept the allegiance of the Merv Turkomans, Her Majesty's Government had every reason to believe that the Russian Government were pledged not to take such a step under existing circumstances, although their more recent assurances had been accompanied by qualifications which reserved to Russia liberty of action in the event of changes not then foreseen, or regarded as possible, taking place at some future time in the state of affairs.

Her Majesty's Government are not aware that any new circumstances have occurred which can be held to create a pressing necessity for the course that has been decided upon; but even if such were the case, it seems entirely inconsistent with the whole tenour of the mutual explanations between the two Governments that one of them should take a step which appears to be in contradiction with the assurances which have on so many occasions been received both from the Emperor and his Government, without any previous communication of their change of views.

M. de Giers, in making the announcement to you, expressed a hope that the measures which were about to be taken would be to the advantage of the Turkoman territory and of the neighbouring States of Persia and Afghanistan, and would be viewed by Her Majesty's Government as being adopted only in the cause of peace and good order.

He did not state in any detail what those measures were to be, and I cannot, therefore, express an opinion upon them; but you will take an early opportunity of urging his Excellency to lose no time in communicating to Her Majesty's Government the proposals which the Russian Government may have to make to them in order to provide against the

complications to which this further extension of Russian sovereignty in the direction of the frontiers of Afghanistan may give rise.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 7.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 17.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 12, 1884.*

I HAD the honour to receive last night your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo relative to the recent annexation of Merv by Russia. I have thought it best to embody its contents in a note which is now being copied, and which will be sent to M. de Giers to-morrow.

I called upon M. de Giers this afternoon, and told him that he would receive a note upon the subject to-morrow, and was beginning to communicate to him the tenour of its contents, when he interrupted me by saying that he had received a despatch from Baron Mohrenheim, in which he stated that your Lordship had observed that, considering all the declarations which had been previously made with regard to Merv, Her Majesty's Government should have been informed of the intention of the Imperial Government to annex that territory. But, his Excellency added, it was impossible to give any information beforehand, because the decision which the Turkoman tribes had come to was taken suddenly, and was a surprise to the Russian authorities.

I remarked that the news may have been a surprise to the Imperial Government, but that it must surely have been anticipated by the authorities at Askabad, for I had observed that a force had been sent to the Tedjend in the direction of Merv, and that an officer had been detached from that force and, accompanied by an escort of Cossacks, had proceeded to Merv. It would appear that it was this officer who had induced the Mervites to offer their submission to the Russian authorities.

M. de Giers admitted that the statements with regard to the force were true, but he assured me that the object of the expedition was to demand satisfaction for raids made by the Merv Turkomans into Persian territory.

The Mervites, however, hearing of the force which had reached the Tedjend, and believing that it had come for the purpose of attacking and occupying Merv, became alarmed, and suddenly determined to offer their allegiance to the Czar; but M. de Giers declared that the step was entirely unforeseen by the Russian Government, and that it would have been impossible to have given to Her Majesty's Government previous notice of its being likely to happen.

I took the opportunity of asking his Excellency what he considered was the extent of the Merv territory. He replied that he supposed that it would reach to the eastward to the Oxus, and to the south to the northern frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja Saleh to the Tedjend.

He added that I should remember that he had some time ago proposed that that boundary should be agreed upon and laid down. I said that I certainly remembered his doing so, and presumed that he was still of opinion that it would be advisable to take measures in that sense.

To this he replied in the affirmative, but I did not think it expedient to continue the conversation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 8.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 21.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March 17, 1884.*

DURING a conversation which I had with M. de Giers on the 15th instant he assured me that General Tchernaieff's successor, General Rosenbach, is a reasonable, moderate man, who will endeavour to avoid all conflicts with neighbouring States, and will strictly carry out the orders and instructions of his Government. He will not proceed to his post for two months, during which time he will prepare himself for his new duties in concert with the Commission now sitting under the presidency of General Ignatieff for

considering the question of the Administration of Turkestan, which is said to be now in a state of the greatest disorder. A brother of M. de Giers is also a member of this Commission, into the deliberations of which it is not unlikely that the future Government of the Merv territory may also be taken.

During the same conversation M. de Giers again said, with reference to Merv, that it was very desirable that an Agreement should be arrived at between Her Majesty's and the Russian Governments as to the line of the boundary of Afghanistan from Khojah Saleh on the Oxus to the Tejend.

No. 9.

*Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.**

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 28, 1884.

I INFORMED you in my despatch of the 22nd January† that the Persian Minister had made representations as to the difficulties entailed on the Shah's Government by the detention of Eyoub Khan.

I now transmit to you a Memorandum of an agreement which has been prepared in communication with Prince Malcom Khan, and which has this day been initialled by him and by myself. It provides that the residence of Eyoub Khan and of the other Afghan Chiefs should be fixed at Tehran or Ispahan, or at some place equally remote from the frontiers of Khorassan, and that 8,000*l.* a-year should be paid through Her Majesty's Legation towards his expenses. The arrangement is to be in force for two years, unless previously terminated by mutual consent, and the payments, which will date from the 1st January of this year, will commence on the day of the arrival of Eyoub Khan at the place at which he is to reside.

You are authorized to sign this Agreement with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Memorandum of Agreement respecting Eyoub Khan to be signed at Tehran by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Representative of Her Britannic Majesty.

1. LE Gouvernement Persan fixera la résidence d'Eyoub Khan à Téhéran ou à Ispahan, ou à une autre localité également éloignée des frontières de Khorassan.

Les autres Chefs Afghans seront également éloignés des frontières de Khorassan.

2. Il sera payé annuellement au Gouvernement Persan à l'ordre du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, par l'entremise de la Légation de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran, la somme de 8,000*l.* pour l'entretien d'Eyoub Khan et des autres Chefs Afghans, à partir du 1er Janvier, 1884. Le premier trimestre ne sera versé que le jour de l'arrivée d'Eyoub Khan au lieu qui lui sera désigné comme résidence conformément au 1er Article.

3. Cet arrangement restera en vigueur pendant deux ans à partir du 1er Janvier, 1884, à moins que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Gouvernement Persan ne conviennent d'un commun accord d'en faire cesser les effets avant cette époque, et pourra être prolongé au delà de cette date par un accord mutuel entre le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Gouvernement Persan.

Memorandum annexed to preceding Agreement.

Pour éviter tout malentendu sur l'interprétation de l'arrangement concernant Eyoub Khan, je crois nécessaire de préciser les points suivants :—

1. Le but de l'arrangement est seulement d'empêcher qu'Eyoub Khan ne se porte sur les frontières Afghans par les routes de Khorassan. Par conséquent, si Eyoub Khan voulait partir ou si le Gouvernement Persan voulait le faire quitter la Perse par toutes autres voies que celles de Khorassan, on ne pourrait y faire aucune objection.

2. En parlant des Chefs Afghans, nous entendons seulement les Chefs qui sont aujourd'hui en Perse et qui entourent Eyoub Khan ou qui ont des attaches avec lui.

* Substance telegraphed.

† "Central Asia, No. 1 (1884)," p. 114.

Le Gouvernement Persan choisira lui-même les localités de leur internement, lesquelles seront éloignées au moins de 50 farsakhs des frontières de l'Afghanistan.

Légation de Perse, Londres, le 27 Mars, 1884.

(Translation.)

1. THE Persian Government shall fix the residence of Eyoub Khan at Tehran and Ispahan, or at some other locality equally distant from the frontiers of Khorassan.

The other Afghan Chiefs shall be also removed from the frontiers of Khorassan.

2. An annual payment shall be made to the Persian Government to the order of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, through the Legation of Her Britannic Majesty at Tehran, of the sum of 8,000*l.*, for the support of Eyoub Khan and the other Afghan Chiefs from the 1st January, 1884. The first quarter shall only be paid on the arrival of Eyoub Khan at the place appointed for his residence in conformity with Article I.

3. This arrangement shall remain in force for two years from the 1st January, 1884, unless Her Majesty's Government and the Persian Government come to a common agreement to annul before that period, and it may be prolonged beyond that date by the common consent of Her Majesty's Government and the Persian Government.

In order to avoid all misunderstanding on the interpretation of the arrangement concerning Eyoub Khan, I consider it necessary to define the following points:—

1. The object of the arrangement is simply to prevent Eyoub Khan from reaching the Afghan frontiers by the Khorassan routes. Consequently, if Eyoub Khan wished to leave, or the Persian Government wished to make him leave Persia by any other route except those through Khorassan, no objection could be taken to it.

2. In speaking of the Afghan Chiefs, we mean only those Chiefs at this moment in Persia in company with Eyoub Khan, or connected with him.

The Persian Government will itself choose the place of their detention, which shall be distant at least 50 farsakhs from the Afghan frontier.

Persian Legation, London, March 27, 1884.

No. 10.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 28, 1884, 7 P.M.

HER Majesty's Government are aware that the question of Eyoub Khan's detention has been an embarrassing one to the Shah, and they appreciate the friendly spirit in which His Majesty has dealt with it. You will inform His Majesty accordingly.

No. 11.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 31.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 26, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a Map, purporting to be of the Akhal Téké territory and of the Merv Oasis, which has been prepared by the Staff of the Russian army, and is for sale at their office. The inclosed map was purchased at that office.

Your Lordship will perceive a coloured line, which is doubtless intended for the boundary between the Merv territory and Afghanistan. It will be seen how far south of Sarakhs and how near Herat it touches the Heri-Rud.

I called this afternoon upon M. de Giers and showed him this map, saying, at the same time, that, though it was prepared by the Staff, it could not possibly be considered official, for that no one had a right, as yet, to say where this boundary would be drawn. I pointed out to him that such a map, if it should become public in England, might have a very bad effect and create a good deal of irritation and excitement.

M. de Giers declared that he had not seen nor heard of this map, nor could it be considered as official; he was even rather surprised at it, because what was apparently intended for the boundary to the south-east of the Merv territory was not in

accordance with the ideas which he had exchanged in conversation with the Minister of War.

His idea, his Excellency added, was that the boundary would be, more or less, a line from Khoja Saleh to Sarakhs, with perhaps some deviations to the south so as to reach the mountain ridges.

His Excellency said that he hoped to be able to send me an answer to my note of the 29th February (12th March), founded upon your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo, in a few days, and that in his reply he should probably allude to the expediency of taking measures for coming to an agreement with regard to the boundary in question, which, he again reminded me, he had suggested last year.

A rumour had been circulated here during the last few days that some opposition had been made by the Mervites to a Russian official being allowed to come to Merv. I asked M. de Giers whether this was true. He replied that, on the contrary, General Komaroff, the Commander-in-chief at Askabad, had gone to Merv with a small escort, accompanied by a M. Tcharikoff, an employé of the Russian Foreign Office. The object of his journey was to make inquiries so as to form an opinion and report to his Government what measures it would be expedient to take for the future government of that territory. From M. Tcharikoff his Excellency had heard that the General had been extremely well received by the Mervites, and that all the different tribes were ready to swear allegiance to the Emperor.

M. Tcharikoff had added that on their way to Merv they had been slightly molested by Saryk Turkomans, who, it was said, were influenced by the Afghans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 12.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 1, 1884.

THE Russian Ambassador called to-day and informed me that he had received a despatch from his Government referring to the interest which had been excited by the speeches in Parliament on the subject of the annexation of Merv.

His Excellency said that although they contained much which called for reply, he was instructed to confine himself to one point for the present, and that was the statement which I had made that the Russian Government had shown a want of the courtesy due to a friendly Power in bringing it face to face with an accomplished fact respecting which assurances had been given to this country.

The Russian Government could not admit that this reproach was deserved. They held that the full liberty of action which the two Governments had reserved to themselves, apart from the special arrangements concluded between them, would have entitled them to consult their own convenience in regard to Merv, but they attached too great a value to their cordial relations with Her Majesty's present advisers not to have wished to explain themselves fully on the subject, had they foreseen the determination of the Mervites. They would, at all events, have endeavoured, had the matter depended upon them, to prevent the decision from being taken at a moment when Her Majesty's Government were embarrassed by the affairs of the Soudan.

But Baron Mohrenheim assured me that this result, although it might have been expected in the more or less distant future, had been a real surprise to the Russian Government, who had also found themselves in the presence of an accomplished fact without being able either to alter it or explain its cause.

As regarded the event itself, his Excellency said that the Russian Government were glad to observe the view taken of it by Her Majesty's Government, the Opposition, and the public. It led them to hope that the matter would not raise any serious difficulty between the two Governments. They had formed the same conclusion from the note addressed by your Excellency to M. de Giers, which would be examined in the most impartial and conciliatory spirit possible.

His Excellency concluded by saying that, in the opinion of M. de Giers, the best course to pursue would be for the two Governments to show the world that they were resolved to abandon their ancient policy of mistrust and antagonism in favour of one of confidence, friendship, and loyal co-operation.

If England would adopt this line of conduct, Russia would gladly follow her example.

I told Baron Mohrenheim that I would not fail to inform my colleagues of the

explanation which M. de Giers had authorized his Excellency to give me as to the reasons why a measure which had seemed obligatory to the Russian Government had not been previously made known to Her Majesty's Government, with whom for so long a time communications had been passing on the subject of Merv.

I stated that I was glad to learn the spirit in which the Russian Government had received the communication which I had addressed to them through your Excellency, and their desire to come to an understanding with Her Majesty's Government in consequence of the altered circumstances of the case. It would be my duty also to enter upon such discussions with perfect frankness, and a desire to arrive at a solution honourable and satisfactory to both countries.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 13.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 3.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 31, 1884.

IN order to carry out the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo, I addressed a note to M. de Giers on the 12th instant, embodying the contents of that despatch.

I have now the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the answer which I have received from his Excellency, and of its inclosure.

I shall not do more than acknowledge the receipt of this note, and shall await your Lordship's further instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 13.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 17 (29) *Mars,* 1884.

LA note que votre Excellence m'a adressé en date du 29 Février (12 Mars), a été soumise à un examen attentif.

Je ne m'étendrai pas ici sur l'exposé historique qu'elle contient des communications échangées entre les deux Gouvernements au sujet de Merve. Je joins ci-près une notice renfermant les points de vue du Ministère Impérial à cet égard.

Je crois plus pratique de m'en tenir au principe, qu'en dehors des arrangements écrits, conclus, et signés entre eux concernant la frontière nord et nord-est de l'Afghanistan, tous deux conservent la pleine liberté d'apprécier ce que réclament leurs propres intérêts, tout en, témoignant un égal respect pour leur dignité et leurs convenances réciproques.

Le Cabinet Impérial croit pour sa part ne s'être jamais écarté de ce respect vis-à-vis du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique. Il s'est abstenu de toute observation au sujet des transactions conclues à différentes époques par l'Angleterre avec les États limitrophes, et qui ont considérablement étendue sa sphère d'action le long de sa frontière Indienne.

Il est fondé à attendre les mêmes égards pour la liberté des déterminations que lui commandent les intérêts de la Russie.

Mais, en même temps, le prix qu'il attache au maintien de bonnes et cordiales relations avec le Cabinet de Londres l'a toujours engagé à se prêter à des explications amicales destinées à écarter toute cause de mésintelligence ou de malentendu entre les deux pays.

C'est pourquoi, lorsque le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique l'a interpellé sur ces intentions quant à certains points de l'Asie Centrale, et notamment au sujet de Merve, il n'a fait aucune difficulté pour répondre avec une entière franchise, sans pourtant attacher à ces réponses la valeur d'engagements qu'il ne pouvait, ni ne devait prendre.

La récente résolution des Chefs Merviens de demander la sujétion de la Russie a été subite. La notice ci-jointe expose la manière dont les choses se sont passées. Cette éventualité devait être envisagée comme possible et désirable dans un avenir plus ou

moins éloigné, du moment où les Merviens se trouvaient placés dans l'alternative de s'exposer à de sévères répressions, s'ils continuaient leurs brigandages, ou de perdre le plus clair de leurs moyens d'existence s'ils y renonçaient. Le Gouvernement Impérial ayant assumé dans son intérêt et dans celui de la Perse, la tâche de mettre un terme à ces désordres et de pacifier la steppe, ne pouvait pas se dispenser d'imposer cette obligation aux Merviens s'ils voulaient vivre en paix avec nous. La résolution que leurs Chefs ont prise de préférer la soumission à la lutte, aux châtiments qu'ils auraient encourus et à l'anarchie où l'oasis aurait été plongée, est certainement l'issue la plus favorable qu'on puisse désirer pour nous, pour eux, et pour tous leurs voisins. Il nous était impossible de nous y refuser. Mais je crois que les conditions dans lesquelles le fait s'est accompli suffisent pour écarter toute pensée d'un manque de courtoisie ou de bon vouloir de notre part envers le Cabinet de Londres.

En terminant sa note, votre Excellence nous demande quelles propositions nous comptons faire au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, afin de prévenir les conséquences pouvant résulter du nouveau pas que nous venons de faire.

Le Cabinet Impérial n'a pas de propositions formelles à faire, et votre Excellence trouvera certainement naturel, qu'après l'interprétation qui a été donnée à nos précédentes assurances, nous devons, à l'avenir, être très circonspects au sujet des assurances nouvelles qui nous seraient demandées. Pour le moment, nous ne saurions préciser la manière dont sera mise à exécution le passage des Merviens sous la sujétion Russe.

Il faudra s'enquérir sur place du mode le plus pratique d'organiser le Gouvernement de l'oasis. Tout ce que nous pouvons dire, c'est que le Cabinet Impérial devra résoudre cette question conformément au but qu'il s'est tracé de pacifier ces contrées, d'y faire régner l'ordre et la sécurité, et d'y introduire les germes de la civilisation.

Quant aux conséquences qui peuvent en résulter, nous croyons qu'elles seront profitables à tout le monde, et nous sommes persuadés que si les deux Gouvernements d'Angleterre et de Russie continuent à s'inspirer des égards que se doivent réciproquement des États voisins, sincèrement animés du désir de maintenir les liens d'amitié qui les unissent, ils pourront aisément prévenir toute complication.

Le Cabinet Impérial y est tout disposé, de même qu'il est déterminé à respecter comme par le passé les arrangements antérieurement conclus entre les deux Gouvernements.

Si le Cabinet de Londres trouvait utile et pratique de compléter ces arrangements par une définition plus exacte des conditions des contrées qui séparent la possession Russe des confins de l'Afghanistan, nous ne pouvons que lui rappeler la proposition que l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté l'Empereur a été chargé de lui faire en 1882. Elle avait pour objet de continuer, à partir de Khodja-Saleh, dans la direction de l'ouest, la ligne de démarcation convenue en 1872-73.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique avait hésité, à cette époque, à émettre un avis sur cette proposition. S'il désire reprendre la négociation, le Cabinet Impérial s'y prêtera volontiers, et votre Excellence peut réitérer à Lord Granville l'assurance qu'il pourra toujours compter sur notre franche et amicale coopération dans la mission civilisatrice que les deux Empires ont à remplir en Asie Centrale.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, March* 17 (29), 1884.

THE note which your Excellency addressed to me on the 29th February (12th March) has received attentive consideration.

I will not dwell upon the historical account which it contains of the communications exchanged between the two Governments on the subject of Merv. I annex a Memorandum containing the views of the Imperial Ministry on this point.

I consider it more useful to confine myself to asserting the principle, that except as regards arrangements written, concluded, and signed between them respecting the north and north-east of Afghanistan, both should retain their full liberty of judgment as to what concerns their own interests, while treating with mutual respect the dignity and susceptibilities of each.

The Imperial Cabinet are convinced that they have never been wanting in respect towards Her Majesty's Government. They have abstained from any observations on the subject of the transactions coucluded at different periods by England with the neighbouring States, which have considerably extended her sphere of action along her Indian frontier.

They have a right to expect the same consideration for the freedom of the decisions demanded by the interests of Russia.

But at the same time, the value they attach to the maintenance of good and cordia relations with the Cabinet of London has always led them to engage in friendly explana tions in order to remove every cause of mistake or misunderstanding between the two countries.

For this reason, when the Government of Her Britannic Majesty inquired as to our intentions with reference to certain points in Central Asia, and especially as to Merv, they made no difficulty in replying with complete frankness, without investing their replies with the value of engagements which they were neither willing nor able to make.

The recent resolution of the Merv Chiefs to request the protection of Russia was a sudden one. The annexed Memorandum shows the way in which it came about. This eventuality was to be expected in the more or less distant future as possible or desirable from the moment when the Merv Turkomans found themselves in the dilemma of having to continue their brigandage under pain of severe repression, or of giving up with it their most natural means of livelihood. The Imperial Government having undertaken in their own interest and in that of Persia the task of putting an end to these disorders and pacifying the Steppes, could not but impose this obligation upon the Merv Turkomans if they were to live at peace with us. The resolution of their Chiefs, to prefer submission to fighting, to the punishment they would have risked, and to the anarchy into which they would have plunged the Oasis, is certainly the most favourable result that could have been desired both for us, for them, and for all their neighbours. It was impossible for us to refuse. But I think that the circumstances of the transaction will sufficiently exonerate us of any want of courtesy or good-feeling towards the Cabinet of London.

At the end of the note, your Excellency asks what proposals we intend to make to Her Majesty's Government with a view to guard against any consequences which may result from the new step we have just taken.

The Imperial Cabinet has no formal proposals to make, and your Excellency will certainly find it natural that, considering the interpretation put upon our former assurances, we should be, in future, very careful on the subject of any fresh assurances demanded of us. At the present moment we are unable to state precisely the manner in which the submission of Merv to the Russians will be carried out.

An inquiry must be made upon the spot as to the most practical method of organizing the government of the Oasis. All that we can say is, that the Imperial Cabinet will endeavour to settle this question in accordance with the object we have proposed to ourselves of pacifying these countries, of establishing order and security, and of introducing the germs of civilization.

As for the possible consequences, we think they will be profitable to all the world, and we are convinced that if the two Governments of England and Russia continue to be animated with the sentiments which should exist between neighbouring States, and are sincerely inspired with the desire of maintaining their friendly connection, they will easily be able to avoid all complications.

The Imperial Cabinet is quite of this opinion, and is also determined to respect, as in the past, all arrangements previously concluded between the two Governments.

In case the Cabinet of London should find it useful and practicable to complete these arrangements by a more exact definition of the condition of the countries which separate the Russian possessions from the boundaries of Afghanistan, we can only recall to them the proposal which the Ambassador of His Majesty the Emperor was ordered to make in 1882. That proposal was to continue from Khodja-Saleh westward the line of demarcation agreed upon in 1872-73.

Her Majesty's Government hesitated at that time to give an opinion upon this proposal. If they desire to resume the negotiation the Imperial Cabinet would willingly concur, and your Excellency can repeat to Lord Granville the assurance that he will always be able to count upon our honest and friendly co-operation in the civilizing mission which the two Empires have to accomplish in Central Asia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 13.

Memorandum.

DANS sa note en date du 29 Février (12 Mars), M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique affirme que la manière de voir du Gouvernement Britannique actuel et de celui qui l'a précédé quant à l'éventualité de l'extension de la souveraineté de la Russie sur Merv est si bien connue du Gouvernement de Russie qu'il lui semblerait à peu près superflu d'en parler aujourd'hui. Son Excellence n'en donne pas moins un exposé historique des explications qui ont été échangées entre les deux Gouvernements depuis la conclusion du Traité de 1873 avec le Khanat de Khiva.

Cet exposé porte l'Ambassadeur à conclure que son Gouvernement possédait des raisons suffisantes pour croire que le Gouvernement de Russie s'était engagé à ne point prendre possession de Merv, quoique les assurances plus récentes aient été accompagnées de réserves de nature à assurer à la Russie une liberté d'action en cas de changements imprévus ou bien s'il était à prévoir qu'un changement pouvait survenir dans l'avenir.

Le Gouvernement Britannique, ajoute M. Thornton, ignore l'existence de circonstances qui auraient placé la Russie dans la nécessité de prendre la décision qu'elle vient d'adopter; mais il lui semble que, même dans ce dernier cas, les explications échangées entre les deux Gouvernements auraient dû empêcher la Russie de s'engager dans une voie qui serait en contradiction avec les assurances reçues précédemment de l'Empereur et de son Gouvernement, avant d'avoir fait part au Gouvernement Britannique du changement qui s'était opéré dans la manière de voir du Cabinet Impérial.

A ces considérations nous sommes en mesure de répondre par les arguments suivants.

Le Gouvernement Britannique n'ignore point que la nature même des pays qui séparent les possessions Russes des contrées comprises dans la sphère d'influence de l'Angleterre exclue très souvent la possibilité du maintien d'un état de choses stables. Cette vérité a été constatée à l'occasion des pourparlers qui ont eu lieu entre les deux Gouvernements en 1869. Il a été reconnu à cette époque que s'il était arrivé à la Russie et à l'Angleterre d'entreprendre des expéditions militaires dans l'une ou l'autre partie de l'Asie Centrale et d'adjoindre à leurs possessions de nouveaux territoires, cette conduite ne leur avait été dictée que par la force des circonstances et par une impossibilité absolue d'agir autrement; que, dans cet état de choses, les frontières Russes et Anglaises en Asie Centrale ne pouvaient être considérées comme immuables et qu'un arrangement international sur ce point resterait sans effet. Ce furent ces considérations qui poussèrent les deux Gouvernements à abandonner le projet primitif d'une zone intermédiaire destinée à séparer leurs possessions en Asie, et à s'entendre sur une délimitation de leurs sphères d'action respectives en fixant les limites nord et nord-est de l'Afghanistan. C'est grâce à cette dernière combinaison que des complications ont pu être prévenues dans la zone qui est traversée par la ligne de démarcation convenue en 1872-73, laquelle, en partant du Lac Sarikoul, s'étend jusqu'à Khodja-Saleh sur l'Amou-Daria.

L'Angleterre pourrait d'autant moins contester aujourd'hui la valeur pratique des principes ci-dessus exposés que ses frontières en Asie ne sont non plus restées immuables depuis 1869, et que pour assurer la sécurité de ses propres confins elle a cru devoir ajouter à ses possessions de nouveaux territoires et établir sa suprématie sur d'autres.

Sans parler des circonstances tout à fait exceptionnelles qui ont été la suite de la dernière guerre d'Orient, ce sont des motifs analogues qui ont poussé la Russie à étendre ses possessions, et qui ont été amené à la fin à la soumission de la population de Merv.

Le Gouvernement Impérial ne saurait admettre que les assurances qu'il s'est trouvé dans le cas d'adresser à différentes reprises au Cabinet Britannique puissent être considérées comme des engagements formels de sa part de ne jamais prendre possession de Merv.

Aux interpellations qui lui ont été successivement adressées par la Grande-Bretagne au sujet de cette éventualité, le Cabinet Impérial s'était toujours borné à répondre par un exposé franc et loyal de sa manière de voir et de ses intentions. Ceux-ci n'ont pu échapper à l'influence des changements qui se sont opérés dans l'état des possessions Russes en Asie Centrale, surtout depuis la conquête de l'oasis d'Akhal-Téké, et il en a été de même du langage du Cabinet Impérial comme, du reste, le constate la note de M. Thornton.

Amenés par la force des circonstances à nous mettre en contact avec la population turbulente de Merv nous ne pouvions nous dissimuler qu'en cas où nos efforts tendant à adoucir les instincts farouches de cette population viendraient à manquer leur but, nous

pourrions difficilement nous soustraire à la nécessité de recourir à la force. Nous n'avons jamais cherché à en faire un mystère au Gouvernement Britannique.

C'est ainsi qu'à l'occasion d'une déclaration faite en 1879 par le Sous-Secrétaire dans l'Inde à la Chambre des Communes au sujet d'une promesse formelle qui aurait été obtenue de Gouvernement Russe de ne point pousser ses opérations jusqu'à Merv, M. de Giers crut devoir faire observer à Lord Dufferin que Mr. Stanhope s'était trop avancé; que les assurances données à la Grande-Bretagne n'excluaient point la possibilité d'une occupation de Merv, en cas où les circonstances démontreraient l'urgence de cette mesure, et que le Cabinet Impérial n'a jamais entendu contracter des engagements solennels de nature à lui interdire pour toujours une marche sur Merv. Des réserves analogues ont été formulées depuis lors toutes les fois que le Cabinet de Londres croyait devoir s'enquérir sur nos intentions.

Le reproche que nous addresse M. Thornton de n'avoir pas prévenu le Gouvernement Britannique de notre résolution de prendre possession de Merv est loin d'être fondé.

Nous pourrions y objecter avec raison que jamais nous ne nous sommes engagés vis-à-vis du Gouvernement Britannique de le prévenir en cas où l'occupation de Merv nous semblerait indispensable; que, d'ailleurs, pour être menée à bonne fin, une opération aussi importante et délicate demandait à être tenue dans le plus grand secret, et que l'ébruiter d'avance c'eut été nous exposer à voir se compliquer les difficultés de notre tâche. Dans le cas présent nous n'avons aucun besoin de nous prévaloir de ces raisons, attendu que pour nous la mission des Merviens a été un événement tout aussi inattendu que pour l'Angleterre.

Voici un exposé succinct des faits que ont amené ce résultat, et qui, en grande partie, sont de notoriété publique.

Désireuse de ne point étendre sans une absolue nécessité nos possessions, et de nous épargner autant que possible les lourds sacrifices qu'entraîne toute prise de possession en Asie Centrale, nous avions pris, dès le lendemain de la conquête de l'oasis d'Akhal, la résolution de ne point dépasser le Tedjen, et de nous borner à exercer une influence morale sur les Merviens dans le but de les astreindre au respect de l'ordre des choses établi par nous. Le Chef de la province Transcaspienne fut invité en conséquence à ouvrir des négociations avec les Chefs de la population de la vallée du Mourgab pour les amener à conclure avec nous des arrangements tendant à les obliger à protéger les caravanes et à empêcher leurs congénères de se livrer au brigandage. Sauf quelques exceptions d'une importance secondaire ce dernier engagement a été observé jusqu'à l'automne dernier, lorsque des avis parvenus de Merv nous apprirent qu'un revirement était en train de s'opérer dans les dispositions des Turcomans, et que ce revirement n'était dû qu'à des émissaires venus de l'Afghanistan, et qui cherchaient à paralyser les effets de nos efforts pacifiques en encourageant les Merviens à la violence. Au nombre de ces émissaires figurait un certain Siappouche, qui prétendait avoir été investi d'une mission Divine, et qui se distinguait surtout par la violence de son langage. Les résultats de cette propagande ne tardèrent pas à se traduire en faits dont il nous était impossible de méconnaître la gravité. Ces bandes composées de plusieurs centaines de Merviens vinrent fondre sur les confins du Khorassan et sur l'Atek, et nous ne tardâmes pas à être informés que d'autres bandes étaient en train de se former pour imiter l'exemple de celles-ci. Il nous était tout à fait impossible de nous renfermer dans l'inaction en présence d'une violation aussi flagrante du pacte conclue, et c'est pour prévenir de plus graves complications que le Commandant des troupes de la province Transcaspienne reçut l'ordre de donner un avertissement aux Merviens en dirigeant un détachement sur Kary-Bend au bord du Tedjen. Ce fut cette démonstration dont nous avons déjà eu précédemment l'occasion d'apprécier les effets salutaires qui fit réfléchir les Merviens aux conséquences de leur conduite. S'étant réunis en conseil, leurs principaux Chefs résolurent de se rendre en personne à Kary-Bend pour déclarer au Commandant de notre détachement que les Merviens reconnaissaient leur impuissance à se gouverner par eux-mêmes, et qu'ils suppliaient le Gouvernement de l'Empereur d'envoyer à Merv un fonctionnaire Russe pour y établir l'ordre et la sécurité.

Il nous était tout à fait impossible de ne pas nous rendre aux vœux des Merviens sans risquer de compromettre gravement notre prestige, ainsi que tous les résultats de nos laborieux efforts. La Perse entre autres, dont les confins ont de tout temps été le théâtre des exploits des bandes de brigands Merviens, aurait pu nous reprocher à bon droit d'avoir laissé échapper une occasion favorable de la délivrer à tout jamais de ce fléau.

(Translation.)

IN his note dated the 29th February (12th March) the Ambassador of Her Britannic Majesty states that the views of the present British Government, and of

that which preceded it, as to the contingency of the extension of Russian sovereignty over Merv, are so well known to the Government of Russia that it would seem almost superfluous to refer to it at the present time. Notwithstanding this, his Excellency gives a historical summary of the explanations which have passed between the two Governments since the conclusion of the Treaty of 1873 with the Khanate of Khiva.

This summary leads the Ambassador to the conclusion that his Government had sufficient reason for believing that the Russian Government had engaged not to take possession of Merv, although the more recent assurances were accompanied by reservations calculated to insure to Russia freedom of action in case of unforeseen changes, or if there was a prospect of a change possibly arising in the future.

The British Government, Sir E. Thornton adds, is not aware of the existence of circumstances which could have placed Russia under the necessity of taking the decision she has just adopted; but it seems to him that, in this latter case, the explanations which had passed between the two Governments should have prevented Russia from embarking on a course which would be in contradiction to the assurances received previously from the Emperor and his Government, before acquainting the British Government with the change which had taken place in the views of the Imperial Cabinet.

We are in a position to reply to these considerations by the following arguments.

The British Government is aware that the very character of the countries which separate the Russian possessions from the districts comprised within the sphere of influence of England very often excludes the possibility of preserving a lasting state of affairs. The truth of this was established at the time of the negotiations which took place between the two Governments in 1869. It was recognized at that time that if Russia and England had undertaken military expeditions in one part or the other of Central Asia, and had added fresh territories to their possessions, such a course had only been dictated by force of circumstances and by an absolute impossibility to act otherwise; that, in this state of things, the Russian and English frontiers in Central Asia could not be considered as immovable, and that an international arrangement on this point would be of no effect. These considerations induced the two Governments to abandon the original scheme of an intermediary zone destined to separate their possessions in Asia, and to agree on a delimitation of their respective spheres of action, fixing the limits north and north-east of Afghanistan. It is thanks to this last arrangement that it has been possible to avert complications in the zone which is crossed by the line of demarcation agreed on in 1872-73, and which, starting from Lake Sarikoul, stretches to Khodja-Saleh on the Amou-Daria.

England could all the less dispute at the present time the practical value of the principles expressed alone, since her own frontiers in Asia have not remained immovable since 1869, and since to secure the safety of her own boundaries she has thought fit to add new territories to her possessions, and to establish her supremacy over other territories.

Without speaking of the altogether exceptional circumstances which resulted from the last war in the East, it is by analogous motives that Russia has been impelled to extend her possessions, and that the submission of the population of Merv has finally been effected.

The Imperial Government cannot allow that the assurances which they were enabled to give on different occasions to the British Cabinet can be held as formal engagements on their part never to take possession of Merv.

To the inquiries which have been successively made by Great Britain on the subject of this contingency, the Imperial Cabinet has always restricted its replies to a frank and loyal statement of its views and intentions. These could not but be subject to the influence of the changes which have taken place in the state of the Russian possessions in Central Asia, especially since the conquest of the Oasis of Akhal-Téké, and this has similarly affected the language of the Imperial Cabinet, as is shown, moreover, in Sir E. Thornton's note.

Having by force of circumstances been brought in contact with the turbulent population of Merv, we could not conceal from ourselves that, supposing our endeavours to soften the savage instincts of that population were to fail, we should find it difficult to avoid having recourse to force. We have never tried to make a mystery of this with the British Government.

Thus, when a Declaration was made in 1879 by the Under-Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons respecting a formal promise, said to have been obtained from the Russian Government, not to extend their operations to Merv,

M. de Giers thought it right to bring to the notice of Lord Dufferin that Mr. Stanhope had gone too far; that the assurances given to Great Britain did not exclude the possibility of an occupation of Merv, supposing circumstances were to show the necessity of that measure, and that the Imperial Cabinet never had the intention of contracting solemn engagements which could interdict them for ever from marching on Merv. Similar reservations have since been formulated whenever the London Cabinet inquired as to our intentions.

There are no grounds for the reproach addressed to us by Sir E. Thornton of not having acquainted the British Government with our resolve to take possession of Merv.

We might with good reason object that we never promised to warn the British Government, in case our occupation of Merv seemed indispensable; that, besides, to be successful, so important and delicate an undertaking called for the utmost secrecy, and that to bruit it abroad previously would have been to expose ourselves to the danger of complicating the difficulties of our task. In the present case there is no need for us to avail ourselves of these reasons, seeing that the mission of the inhabitants of Merv was an event just as unexpected by us as by England.

The following is a succinct summary of the facts which have led to this result, and which, in great part, are of public notoriety.

Being desirous not to extend our possessions without absolute necessity, and of avoiding, as far as possible, the heavy sacrifices entailed by any act of occupation in Central Asia, we had resolved, immediately after the conquest of the Akhal Oasis, not to cross the Tedjend, and to restrict ourselves to exercising a moral influence over the inhabitants of Merv, with the object of constraining them to respect the state of affairs established by us. The Chief of the Trans-Caspian Province was consequently invited to open negotiations with the Chiefs of the population of the Valley of the Murghab to induce them to conclude arrangements with us, with a view to make them protect caravans and prevent their fellow countrymen from the pursuit of brigandage. With a few exceptions of secondary importance this last engagement was observed up to last autumn, when advices from Merv informed us that a change was coming over the disposition of the Turkomans, and that this change was due to nothing else than to emissaries from Afghanistan, who were endeavouring to paralyze the effects of our pacific efforts by instigating the inhabitants of Merv to violence. Among these emissaries was a certain Siappouche, who pretended to be invested with a divine mission, and who was especially noticeable for the violence of his language. The results of this propaganda soon transpired in the shape of acts, the gravity of which it was impossible to misconstrue. These bands of several hundreds of Mervians invaded the boundaries of Khorassan and the banks of the Atek, and we were soon informed that other bands were beginning to imitate their example. It was quite impossible for us to remain inactive in presence of such a flagrant violation of the compact arrived at, and it was with a view of preventing more serious complications that the Commandant of the troops in the Trans-Caspian Province received orders to give a warning to the Mervians by moving a detachment on Kary-Bend on the banks of the Tedjend. It was this demonstration, the salutary effects of which we have already had occasion to recognize, which led the Mervians to reflect on the consequences of their conduct. Having assembled in council, their principal Chiefs resolved to go in person to Kary-Bend to announce to the Commandant of our detachment that the Mervians recognized their inability for self-government, and begged the Government of the Emperor to send a Russian functionary to Merv for the establishment of order and security there.

We could not possibly help acquiescing in the desires of the Mervians without running the risk of seriously compromising our prestige, as well as all the results of our laborious efforts. Amongst others, Persia, whose borders have always been the theatre of the exploits of the bands of Mervian brigands, would have had good reason to reproach us for having lost a favourable opportunity of delivering her from this scourge for ever.

No. 14.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April 7*, 1884.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 26th ultimo, forwarding copy of a Map prepared by the Staff of the Russian army of the Akhal Téké territory and

of the Merv Oasis, and informing me of a conversation you had had with M. de Giers relative to the boundary between the Merv territory and Afghanistan, as drawn in the map in question.

Her Majesty's Government approve the language held by your Excellency to M. de Giers on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 15.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 8.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 3, 1884.*

DURING a conversation which I had yesterday with M. de Giers at his office I inquired what was being done at Merv.

His Excellency admitted that there had been some little trouble on General Komaroff's arrival there, or rather before he actually entered Merv. He said that the General had with him an escort of 200 men, that on approaching Merv they were surrounded by a multitude of armed Turkomans, who were incited to resist their advance by an Afghan whose name he could not recall, but I presume it is the same person to whom allusion is made in the inclosure in M. de Giers' note of the 29th ultimo. Some shots were fired by these men, when the Russian escort was also obliged to fire. One Russian was wounded, and several of the Turkomans were killed. The ringleaders were arrested, but the Afghan escaped for the moment; he was, however, pursued and captured.

This resistance having been crushed, General Komaroff entered the Settlement, was exceedingly well received, at once established a court of justice, and was considering what steps should be taken for the future government of the Merv Turkomans and of their territory. His Excellency expressed his hope that peace and order would soon be established in those regions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 16.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 9.)

My Lord, *Tehran, March 5, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose communications I have received concerning the reported submission of Merv to the Russians. As your Lordship will observe, the submission of the Merv Turkomans is at present confined to the tribe of Makhdum Kuli Khan alone.

In a conversation I had to-day with the Russian Minister, M. Melnikoff told me that no Governor had as yet been sent to Merv, as the Russian Government had not arrived at a final decision as to the nature of the appointment. He added that, in his opinion, the Governor would have to be accompanied by an armed escort, but he did not consider that a large force would be necessary, as the Merv Tékés were very much cowed by recent events.

The people of Merv, M. Melnikoff said, are divided into two camps: the party of order, consisting of those who have lands and personal property constitutes the one, whilst the other is made up of all those who have nothing to lose. The deputation of Chiefs and Elders that had come to the Russian camp to offer submission was composed of representatives of the party of order, and they had pressed the Russian authorities to furnish them with the means of keeping in restraint the more turbulent elements of the Merv population, who were only intent on robbery and marauding expeditions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 16.

(Translation.) *February* 10, 1884.

MAKHDUM KULI KHAN and Ali Khan, who were sent by the Russians to Merv with proposals to the Chiefs, were instructed to remain for ten days at Merv to endeavour to obtain the submission of its people to the Russians, and to induce them to give up their cannon and the prisoners taken in their raids, as well as to abstain from raiding in the future. The Merv Chiefs told them in reply that they had no objection to becoming Russian subjects, but that they would not give up their cannon, nor could they release the prisoners already sold. As to the prisoners taken in the recent raids on Dereghez and Jam, they would give them up in exchange for their camels recently seized by the Governor of Sarakhs. They were not able to put a stop to raiding unless the Russian Government would either pay an annual pension of 40 tomans a-piece to 1,000 horsemen whom they would employ to keep down the raiders, or else appoint a Governor to reside in Merv and keep the plunderers in check. They had no longer any of the sheep they had taken from Dereghez. Finally, the Téké Elders assembled in the house of Makhdum Kuli Khan, where they were told to return the prisoners lately taken, it being agreed that their camels should be restored to them. With this hope seventeen prisoners were surrendered to the Russian agents, and a paper was given to the effect that they would abstain from raids for one month to give time for an answer from the Russian authorities. Four Chiefs, viz., Sari Bahadoor, of the Bakhshi tribe, Murad Khan, of the Amanshah tribe, Yusuf Khan, the brother of Makhdum Kuli Khan, of the Vekeel tribe, and Mangoolee Khan Ferrah Achmet, of the tribe of Sichmaz, with twenty of the Elders and the seventeen prisoners, then proceeded to Askabad.

February 13, 1884.

Makhdum Kuli Khan and Nur Verdi Khan, who had been at Merv, arrived recently at Lutfabad with several of the Chiefs and Elders of their tribe, together with some twenty-two released prisoners. From thence they proceeded to Askabad with the Russian Colonel. It is worthy of notice that the Chiefs and Elders all belong to their own tribe, from which also they obtained the prisoners now with them. The other tribes have not submitted to the Russians. It is said that the Merv Elders in question, before leaving the town, organized a band of 100 horsemen to prevent robberies, authority being given to them to cut off the heads of any persons persisting in leaving Merv in search of plunder. The result of this measure has been the stoppage of raids at the cost of the heads of three recalcitrants. The tribe of Makhdum Kuli Khan is for the present completely under Russian orders; they are surrendering their prisoners and cannon. The other tribes have not as yet submitted.

No. 17.

Extract of a Report from Colonel Stewart, dated Mohsinabad, February 13, 1884.—(*Received April* 9.)

MIR OSMAN KHAN, the Afghan Governor of Penjdeh, has returned to Herat, as he found that the Saruk Turkomans of Penjdeh were not fully obedient to his orders, and that they had only paid him a portion of the revenue due by them. As the Governor of Herat felt that this was not an opportune moment for enforcing the payment of revenue in full by the Penjdeh Saruk, he wrote to Yalantush Khan, the Jamshidi Chief commanding at Bala Murghab, telling him that Penjdeh was under his orders, and to make the best arrangement he could. Yalantush Khan also, considering that the time was not opportune for the collection of the balance of the Penjdeh revenue, or for carrying out coercive measures against the Turkomans of Penjdeh, contented himself with sending one of his followers to reside at Penjdeh in the house of a Chief favourable to the Afghan rule, to keep him fully informed of all that passed.

No. 18.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 9, 1884.

THE Russian Ambassador has sent me a Memorandum of some observations in regard to Merv which he had intended to make to me yesterday if our interview had not been suddenly interrupted.

Baron Mohrenheim refers in this Memorandum to the reply of the Russian Government to the representation which I had instructed your Excellency to make on this subject, and he expresses the hope that Her Majesty's Government will have appreciated its friendly nature. Its guiding principles were confidence and reciprocity, which were indispensable to any real and durable understanding, and without which no good could be expected or attained. He observes that British action in Afghanistan, Khelat, Beloochistan, and Seistan has never formed the subject of inquiry on the part of Russia, who has never asked what the intentions of England might or might not be on her frontiers. Russia had the right to claim the same consideration where her frontiers were concerned, and she would have replied in that sense to any other Government; but she thought it desirable to establish the loyalty of her acts, and especially the absence of all ill-will in her proceedings.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 19.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 17, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April* 17, 1884.

THE Agreement respecting Eyoub Khan was signed to-day.

No. 20.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 21, 11 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April* 21, 1884, 4·30 P.M.

FOLLOWING news received from Sarakhs:—

"The Russians have received a reinforcement of 1,000 men at Merv, with two heavy guns. They are building a fort at Koshid Kale. The Russian Agent sent to Maimeneh has not yet returned. Agent sent to obtain submission of Salor Turkomans at Penjdeh returned with an evasive answer. It was rumoured that Russian Commander-in-chief was coming to Sarakhs, to take possession of lands on right bank of river, and make them over to Merv Turkomans, and that he would proceed to the south in the direction of Herat, as far as Toman Aga and Kafir Kaleh. Four hundred Persians held in captivity at Merv had been released by the Russian authorities."

No. 21.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April* 24, 1884, 7·35 P.M.

INFORM M. de Giers that a despatch will be sent to you accepting Russian proposal for delimitation of frontier of Afghanistan, and at the same time express the hope of Her Majesty's Government that it is not the case, as stated in Mr. Thomson's telegram,* either that Russian agents have been sent to the Afghan districts of Penjdeh and Maimeneh, or that it is their intention to visit places such as Toman Aga and Kafir Kaleh, which are in Afghan territory. You will urge his Excellency to give orders to Russian agents to respect Afghan rights, and to abstain from any proceedings which would prejudice the friendly negotiations which are about to be commenced.

No. 22.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, April* 29, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th January, in which I informed you that inquiries were being made with regard to the proceedimgs of Afghan troops in Shignan,

* No. 20.

your Excellency will, in replying to M. de Giers' complaints as to the proceedings of Afghan troops in Shignan, state that Her Majesty's Government are most anxious to meet the wishes of the Russian Government in maintaining tranquillity on the Shignan-Darwaz frontier, but that the Ameer considers that Shignan and Roshan are part of Badakshan, which was formally declared in 1872-73 to belong to Afghanistan; that the information in the possession of the Indian Government is not sufficient to enable them to pronounce a decided opinion on the subject, but that Her Majesty's Government would be happy to consider the question in concert with the Russian Government, and to send a Commissioner to make an investigation on the spot jointly with a Russian and Afghan Commissioner.

No. 23.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 29, 1884.

I HAVE received and laid before the Queen your Excellency's despatch of the 31st ultimo, forwarding the reply of M. de Giers to the note which you addressed to him on the 29th February on the subject of the annexation of Merv by Russia.

Her Majesty's Government are glad that the representations which you were instructed to make have been received in a friendly spirit. They cordially concur in the desire expressed by his Excellency that all complications may be avoided by a friendly understanding, and they are, equally with the Russian Government, determined to respect the arrangements in regard to Central Asian affairs, which have been concluded on previous occasions between the two Governments.

The advance of Russia towards the frontiers of Afghanistan gives an increased importance to the question of the definition of the boundaries which divide that State from the territories under the influence of Russia, and Her Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the proposal put forward in 1882, and now repeated by M. de Giers, for the delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khodja Saleh westwards.

You will inform M. de Giers of this decision, and you will add that Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that it would be desirable that the principal points of the boundary line should be laid down on the spot, and that a Joint Commission, including an Afghan Representative, should be appointed for that purpose, and should commence operations next autumn.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 24.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 1, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, May* 1, 1884.

REPORT received from Colonel Stewart that Panjdeh district had been visited by a Russian engineer. This officer, when challenged by the Afghan authorities, stated that he had lost his way whilst travelling on the frontier. After making inquiries as to the nationality of the inhabitants, he returned to Sarakhs to rejoin the Russian Commander-in-chief.

No. 25.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 28, 1884.

I HAD the honour to receive your Lordship's telegram of the 24th instant on the morning of the 25th instant. I called upon M. de Giers on the same day, and acquainted him with the contents of that telegram verbally. At the same time I thought it expedient, as the matter is of some importance, to leave with him a Memorandum, copy of which I have the honour to inclose.

I at the same time informed him that Her Majesty's Government would accept the

proposal which had been made by the Imperial Government for the delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan, at which his Excellency expressed his satisfaction.

At the same time, I pointed out to him in earnest terms how desirable it would be that when, as he had often informed me, the Imperial Government wished that an agreement should be arrived at with regard to the northern boundary of Afghanistan between Sarakhs and Khoja Saleh on the Oxus, no complications should be brought about by the visits of Russian Agents to places which were actually within the territory of Afghanistan.

I mentioned to M. de Giers that it was reported that 1,000 men had been sent to Merv with some heavy guns; but his Excellency expressed his belief that this was an exaggerated statement, and that not more than 200 had gone there.

It was true, he said, that General Komaroff had been at Sarakhs; for he had been instructed to visit it on his return from Merv. The object was to put the Merv Turkomans in possession of the lands which they had formerly occupied on the right bank of the Tedjend, and also to inquire into complaints which had been made that the water which had been formerly made use of for the purposes of irrigation had been recently cut off. M. de Giers stated that in former times the Persian authorities were so apprehensive of the incursions threatened by the Merv Turkomans, that they did not venture to deprive them of the water which they required; but that since they had been to a certain extent guaranteed from these raids by the neighbourhood of the Russian forces, they had not hesitated to cut off the water of which the Turkomans had formerly had the advantage.

I have now the honour to inclose copy of a letter which I received yesterday afternoon from M. de Giers, transmitting a Memorandum in reply to mine of the 25th instant, in which he explains the reasons which induced General Komaroff to send two Agents to Yolatan, and to authorize them even to proceed to Panjdeh in case of need.

His Excellency, however, affirms that no Agent has been sent to Maimène, which he admits to be within Afghan territory.

But M. de Giers denies that General Komaroff has ever had the intention of visiting Kafir Kalé. With regard to Toman Aga, he states that it is not marked in any map at his disposal. The next time I see his Excellency I shall be able to show him on a Russian map, issued by the Russian Staff Office, the place marked in that map as Toman Aga.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 25.

Memorandum.

LE Gouvernement de Sa Majesté a reçu la nouvelle que des Agents Russes ont été envoyés à Panjdeh pour procurer la soumission des Turcomans Salors; qu'un autre Agent a visité Méïmené, d'où il n'était pas encore de retour; et que le Commandant-en-chef venait à Sarakhs pour prendre possession des terres sur la rive droite de la rivière vis-à-vis de cet endroit, et pour en donner possession aux Turcomans de Merv. On ajoutait qu'il irait vers le sud dans la direction de Hérat jusqu'à Toman Aga et Kafir-Kalé.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté exprime l'espoir que ce n'est pas vrai que des Agents Russes aient été envoyés aux endroits susmentionnés ou que ce soit l'intention du Commandant-en-chef de visiter des endroits comme Toman Aga et Kafir-Kalé, qui sont dans le territoire Afghan; il espère que le Gouvernement Impérial donnera des ordres aux Agents Russes de respecter les droits de l'Afghanistan et de s'abstenir de tout acte qui pourrait entraver des négociations amicales.

St. Pétersbourg, le 13 (25) *Avril,* 1884.

(Translation.)

HER Majesty's Government have been informed that Russian agents have been sent to Penjdeh to procure the submission of the Salor Turkomans; that another agent had visited Meimeneh, where he still was; and that the Commander-in-chief was going to Sarakhs to take possession of the lands on the right bank of the river opposite that place, and hand them over to the Merv Turkomans. It was added that he was going south, in the direction of Herat, as far as Toman Aga and Kafir-Kale.

Her Majesty's Government hope that it is not true that Russian agents have been sent to the above-mentioned places, or that the Commander-in-chief intends to visit places

such as Toman Aga and Kafir-Kale, which are in Afghan territory; they trust that the Imperial Government will instruct their agents to respect Afghan rights, and to abstain from any act which might hinder friendly negotiations.

St. Petersburgh, April 13 (25), 1884.

Inclosure 2 in No. 25.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

Cher Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 15 (27) *Avril*, 1884.

EN réponse à la notice que vous avez bien voulu me remettre avant-hier au sujet de l'action attribué aux autorités Russes dans les contrées avoisinant l'oasis de Merv, je crois devoir vous transmettre ci-après un exposé de la situation telle qu'elle résulte de mes dernières informations.

(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

Dear Ambassador, *St. Petersburgh, April* 15 (27), 1884.

IN reply to the note which you were good enough to hand me the day before yesterday with regard to the alleged proceedings of the Russian authorities in the countries bordering the Merv Oasis, I think it right to forward to you herewith a Report on the situation according to the latest information I have received.

(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 25.

Memorandum.

M. L'AMBASSADEUR d'Angleterre a bien voulu remettre au Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères une notice contenant un résumé des renseignements parvenus au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine au sujet de l'action des autorités Russes de la Province Transcaspienne dans les contrées contiguës à l'oasis de Merv. Ces renseignements offrant sous plus d'un rapport des inexactitudes, le Ministère Impérial se fait un devoir d'exposer l'état réel des choses dans ces parages, tel qu'il résulte des informations fournies par les susdites autorités.

Le Gouverneur de la Province Transcaspienne s'est en effet vu dans la nécessité d'envoyer deux de ses Agents pour visiter les localités sises au sud de Merv et habitées par les tribus Turcomanes connues sous les noms de Saryk et de Salour. Cette disposition a été motivée par un recours de ces mêmes Turcomans. Il n'est que trop bien connu que le groupement actuel des tribus Turcomanes, éparpillées dans les steppes s'étendant entre la Mer Caspienne et l'Amou-Daria, n'est dû qu'à l'animosité qui les sépare et qui a sa source dans la différence d'origine. Les Saryks et les Salours étant numériquement plus faibles que les Tékés, ont de tout temps eu à souffrir de la violence de ces derniers, ce qui les a obligés à plus d'une reprise de charger de résidence et de se réfugier même quelquefois sur le territoire Afghan. A l'heure qu'il est, ils habitent les oasis de Solatan et de Pendjdé, mais les terrains qu'ils y occupent n'étant pas suffisants pour leurs besoins, ils désiraient reprendre possession des terres sur le Mourgab, dont ils ont été naguère refoulés par les Tékés. C'est pour obtenir l'autorisation des autorités Russes à cet effet, ainsi que des garanties contre les violences de leurs voisins de Merv, qu'ils ont envoyé dernièrement une députation auprès du Lieutenant-Général Komarow, et c'est uniquement pour recueillir des informations qui pourraient servir de base à l'établissement de rapports pacifiques entre les différentes tribus que ce dernier a cru devoir charger les deux Agents en question de visiter Yolatan et, en cas de nécessité, Pendjdé. Aucun projet d'annexion ne se rattache à cette mission, et le Gouvernement Impérial a tout lieu d'espérer que les Turcomans se soumettront de plein gré aux prescriptions du Gouverneur de la Province Transcaspienne, qui auront pour but de leur assurer une existence tranquille.

Le Ministère Impérial croit pouvoir affirmer, d'autre part, qu'aucun Agent n'a été envoyé à Méïmené. Aux termes de l'arrangement intervenu entre les deux Puissances, Méïmené fait partie des États de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan, et le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté l'Empereur est résolu à respecter scrupuleusement, comme par le passé, tous les engagements qu'il avait contractés en vertu de l'arrangement en question.

Le Général Komarow se proposait, en effet, à son retour à Askhabad, de visiter l'ancien

Sarakhs, sur la rive droite du Tedjen, où les Turcomans de Merv venaient se fixer autrefois pour s'y livrer à l'agriculture. A l'heure qu'il est, cette localité est complètement dépourvue de population, mais, vu la sécurité qui règne dans ces parages depuis la soumission de Merv à l'autorité Russe, il n'est pas improbable que des familles Turcomanes, se trouvant dans l'impossibilité de se procurer ailleurs des moyens d'existence, viendront de nouveau s'y établir.

Il est tout à fait inexact, d'autre part, que le Général Komarow ait jamais eu l'intention de visiter Kafir-Kalé. Pour ce qui est de Toman Aga, le Ministère Impérial se voit dans le cas de déclarer que ce point n'est marqué sur aucune des cartes qui se trouvent à sa disposition. Il croit néanmoins pouvoir assurer le Gouvernement Britannique que les autorités Russes s'abstiendront soigneusement d'intervenir dans cette localité, s'il est constaté que celle-ci fait partie du territoire Afghan.

Le Ministère Impérial se plaît à espérer que les explications ci-dessus exposées suffiront pour rassurer le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine sur les intentions loyales et pacifiques du Gouvernement de l'Empereur, et que les négociations engagées entre les deux Puissances à la suite de la soumission de Merv ne tarderont pas à amener dans cette partie de l'Asie Centrale l'établissement d'un ordre de choses basé sur le respect de leurs droits et intérêts réciproques.

(Translation.)

THE English Ambassador has been good enough to hand to the Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs a note giving the substance of the information which has reached the Government of Her Majesty the Queen with regard to the action of the Russian authorities of the Transcaspian Province in the countries bordering upon the Merv Oasis. As the information in question is in more than one particular inexact, the Imperial Minister feels ound to make known the real state of affairs in those parts, according to the information furnished by the authorities in question.

The Governor of the Transcaspian Province has, as a matter of fact, been obliged to send two agents to visit the districts south of Merv, which are inhabited by the Turkoman tribes, which are known as Saryks and Salors. This step was taken at the instance of the Turkomans themselves. It is well known that the present distribution of the Turkoman tribes, scattered as they are over the Steppes which stretch from the Caspian to the Amou-Daria, is only due to the hostility which keeps them apart, and which arises from difference of origin. The Saryks and Salors, being numerically weaker than the Tékés, have always suffered from the violence of the latter, owing to which they have been more than once obliged to move their Settlements, and even occasionally to take refuge in Afghan territories. At the present time they inhabit the Oases of Yulatan and Penjdeh, but as the lands they occupy there are not sufficient for their needs, they were anxious to retake possession of the lands on the Murghab, from which they were formerly ousted by the Tékés. It was to obtain the authorization of the Russian authorities for this step, as also guarantees against the violence of their neighbours at Merv, that they lately sent a deputation to Lieutenant-General Komarow, and it was solely to collect such information as might serve as a basis for establishing peaceful relations between the different tribes that General Komarow thought fit to direct the two agents in question to visit Yulatan, and, if necessary, Penjdeh. There was no question of annexation in this mission, and the Imperial Government has every reason for hoping that the Turkomans will of their own free-will submit to the control of the Governor of the Transcaspian Province, which will be directed to securing to them a peaceful existence.

The Imperial Ministry can, on the other hand, state that no agent has been sent to Meimeneh. According to the terms of the arrangement come to between the two Powers, Meimeneh is included in the country of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor is resolved to scrupulously respect, as it has done in times past, all the engagements it contracted in virtue of the arrangement in question.

General Komarow was indeed thinking, on his return to Askhabad, of visiting Old Sarakhs, on the right bank of the Tejend, where the Turkomans of Merv used formerly to come to devote themselves to agriculture. At the present moment this neighbourhood is entirely uninhabited, but, in view of the security which has been established there since the submission of Merv to Russian authority, it is not improbable that some Turkoman families, finding it impossible to procure means of subsistence elsewhere, will establish themselves there again.

Again, the statement that General Komarow intended to visit Kafir-Kale is quite inexact. As regards Toman Aga, the Imperial Ministry is obliged to say that this spot is marked on none of the maps in its possession. But they can assure the British Govern-

ment that the Russian authorities will be careful not to interfere in the neighbourhood in question if it is clear that it forms a part of Afghan territory.

The Imperial Ministry hopes that the above explanations will reassure the Government of Her Majesty the Queen as to the loyal and pacific intentions of the Emperor's Government, and that the negotiations entered into between the two Powers, after the submission of Merv, will now bring about in this part of Central Asia the establishment of an order of things based on the respect of their mutual rights and interests.

No. 26.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 5.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 2, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Tiflis has been received here to the effect that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, Governor-General of the Caucasus, left that town on the 27th instant to proceed to Merv.

A later telegram states that his Excellency left Bakou for Krasnovodsk on the 29th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 27.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 7.)

My Lord, *Tehran, March 28, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, a Report on the subject of the submission of Merv to the Russians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Report.

March 11, 1884.

THE Merv Elders who went recently to offer submission at Askabad were made to take an oath of allegiance on the Koran, after which the title of Khan and a dress of honour was given to the four principal ones, and the remainder also received presents. Yusuf Khan, the son of Mir Verdi Khan, has been appointed Governor of Merv, with Ali Khan as his Lieutenant. General Komaroff arrived at Lutfabad on the 4th instant, with an escort of 100 soldiers, and went on immediately to Tejend. Since then four detachments, numbering in all 800 men, have been sent to reinforce him. The sons of Mir Verdi Khan, with the Merv Elders, have gone on to Tejend with some few Akhal horsemen. It is understood from what these persons said that it has been arranged that the Merv Elders are to go to Tejend. Baba Khan and some of the Elders are to remain there, but Yusuf Khan, Ali Khan, the Interpreter, and the remaining Elders are to proceed to Merv, where they are to form a permanent Settlement. If the Merv professions turn out to be true, and the people abstain from all disorderly proceedings, a limited number of soldiers will be quartered in the district to maintain order; but should they show signs of turbulence, General Komaroff will proceed to Merv with the whole of the Askabad troops, and take forcible possession of the places. The Russian troops are gradually concentrating in the Tejend district, and if the roads had not been rendered impassable by snow, General Komaroff would have already entered Merv. Communications with that place have been closed for the last fortnight. The snow lying on the ground in the Ateks is more than a yard in depth.

No. 28.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 7.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April 2, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith extract from Report I have received from Colonel Stewart concerning the position of affairs on the Khorassan frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 28.

Colonel Stewart to Colonel Sir O. Burne.

(Extract.) *Mohsinabad, February 27, 1884.*

A PARTY of Persian cavalry who have just returned from Zohrabad say that a party of Russian troops have arrived at Kala Koushid Khan, the old ruined fort on the eastern side of the Tejend, about 6 or 7 miles from Sarakhs, near Old Sarakhs, and that a Russian official has proceeded to Merv to arrange for the taking over of the Government by Russia of the Merv country.

Inclosure 2 in No. 28.

Colonel Stewart to Colonel Sir O. Burne.

(Extract.) *Mohsinabad, March 5, 1884.*

SINCE the date of my last Report of the 27th February the news of this frontier has been as follows:—

The occupation by a party of Russians of the old fort of Koushid Khan, on the eastern side of the Tejend, close to Old Sarakhs, and about 6 or 7 miles from the Persian fort of Sarakhs, is confirmed. The party of Russians occupying this fort is said to be a small one, consisting of from thirty to forty men.

A second party of Persian captives have arrived released by the Téké in obedience to Russian orders. One of the prisoners, a boy of about 13 years of age, belongs to Mohsinabad. He said he appealed to the Russian Agent, who had come to Merv to treat with the Turkomans for the release of the Persian prisoners, and he took him and released him. The Russian Agent had with him thirty Cossacks.

Sari Khan, the Chief of the Saruk Turkomans of Yulatan, who had gone to Khiva, has written to his friends at Yulatan, saying the Khan of Khiva and the Russian authorities are most kind to him, and that he would soon be coming down with troops to Yulatan. This would seem to point to a Russian advance from Pietro-Alexandrovsk, as well as from the Tejend side.

No. 29.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 7.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April 3, 1884.*

HAVING understood that the Indian Government were anxious to obtain information concerning Penjdeh I wrote to Colonel Stewart on the subject, and have now the honour to inclose a copy of a Report he has addressed to Sir Owen Burne respecting that district and the northern frontier of Afghanistan between the Heri-Rud and the Murghab Rivers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Colonel Stewart to Colonel Sir O. Burne.

(Extract.) *Mohsinabad, March* 19, 1884.

I WAS informed by Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Persia that the Government would be glad of any information about Penjdeh, and I have since been collecting all the information I could about Penjdeh and the northern frontier of Afghanistan between the Heri-Rud and the Murghab Rivers.

2. This village of Mohsinabad, where I am at present residing, is inhabited by people of the Hazara and Jamshedi tribes. These two tribes of Afghanistan claim, as their lands, the upper course of the Murghab River, and whoever may have lived at Penjdeh during the last 100 years and more have paid their revenue to the Afghan Government either through the Chief of the Jamshedis residing at Kushk and Bala Murghab, or through the Hazara Chief residing at Kala Nau.

3. Any line of frontier between Russia and Afghanistan on the Heri-Rud should be drawn a little north of Pul-i-Khatun. The country on the eastern side of the Heri-Rud, at least as far north as Pul-i-Khatun, or the Lady's Bridge, is certainly Afghan, even according to Persian accounts. All the guard towers I saw had been built by Ameer Killitch Khan, the Wazir of Shah Zamen of Afghanistan. These towers were built about sixty years ago by the Afghans for the protection of their frontier.

4. I will now mention what information I have collected about Penjdeh, as a portion of the country on the Upper Murghab River is called. The whole country belonging to Afghanistan between the Heri-Rud and Murghab Rivers is called Badkis, and Penjdeh is a district of Badkis. Badkis is a fine down country, with plenty of grass and pistachio bushes, and springs of water, sufficient for flocks and herds, but not sufficient for irrigation and the cultivation of the ground until the neighbourhood of the Kushk stream is reached. The portion of Badkis travelled over by me last September was covered with grass, and great quantities of pistachio nuts were being collected by Salor Turkomans for Zohrabad in Persia. Abandoned wells were seen in many places besides those which still contained water. Wells can easily be dug, water being near the surface at a depth of from 10 to 18 feet. The country reminded me very much of the English southdowns, the hills being only somewhat bolder and higher. The tribes who inhabit Badkis are the Jamshedis and Hazaras. The western portion of Badkis is said to be much superior to the eastern portion where I was, though that is very superior to Persia. These tribes are chiefly nomads, though they do cultivate a certain amount of land. The Jamshedis are a tribe of Persian race; they formerly extended down the course of the Murghab and occupied Penjdeh; now they are confined to the country on the Kushk stream and on the Murghab about Bala Murghab, and as far as Maruchak. The fort of Bala Murghab, on the Murghab River, is held by a regiment of regular Afghan infantry from Cabul, with a detachment of Afghan artillery with two guns. At Bala Murghab, besides the Afghan officer in command of the troops, Yalantush Khan, the Chief of the Jamshedi tribe, resides. In the neighbourhood of Bala Murghab are settled about 1,000 families of the Jamshedi, Hazara, and Feruz Kuhi tribes. Their cultivation extends down the course of the Murghab as far as the old fort of Maruchak, I am told. These tribes are not of Turkoman race, but are members of the nomad tribes of the Herat district known as Charbar Aimak.

5. From the Afghan fort of Bala Murghab to Maruchak it is about 20 miles, and to 2 miles beyond Maruchak the land is considered to belong to Bala Murghab. Below Maruchak the inhabitants are of the Saruk tribe of Turkomans. From Maruchak to Kara Agatch, where there is a band or dam known as Band-i-Nadiri, is about 12 miles. This piece of country, though occupied by Turkomans, is not Penjdeh. The Penjdeh district is said to commence at Kara Agatch, and some 12 miles lower down the river than Kara Agatch are some ruins of a tower and a ditch known as Old Penjdeh. Old Penjdeh was built by a Hazara Chief named Bumyad Khan. It is situated on the western side of Murghab River, close to the river bank. About 2 miles from Old Penjdeh, and about the same distance west of the river, is situated New Penjdeh. It is a great inclosure or fort, but has no houses or inhabitants in it. Some twelve or fifteen years ago the Saruk built this place. They built two walls one within the other at a few paces distance, and filled in the space between with earth. The wall is in consequence very thick, and was built in this way to resist artillery. It is, however, very low, and is, I gather, not a place of much strength. It was built so that the whole tribe should retire into it in case

of attack. The population live in reed huts or felt tents, like all Turkomans. This place may be called the head-quarters of the Saruk of Penjdeh.

6. There are said never to have been villages in Penjdeh, but it was originally divided into five districts, and thus came its name of Penjdeh, or five villages. It has always formed a part of Afghanistan ever since Afghanistan became a kingdom. Until sixty years ago Penjdeh was inhabited by Jamshedis, or Hazaras, according as the Jamshedi Chief at Kushk or the Hazara Chief at Kala Nau was the most powerful, or the most in favour at Herat. About sixty years ago some Turkomans of the Eyrsari tribe who inhabit the bank of the Oxus came and settled at Penjdeh, paying a regular tax to the Afghan Government, a Naib, or Deputy-Governor, on the part of that Government, residing amongst them. After the arrival of the Eyrsari a few hundred families of the Salor Turkomans who then occupied Yulatan were allowed to settle on the same terms. The revenue was at that time paid to the Afghan Government through Dervish Khan, the Jamshedi Chief. About fifty-six years ago, the Hazaras being at the moment in favour at Herat, the Eyrsari and Salor paid their revenue through the Hazara Chief at Kala Nau.

7. About twenty-seven years ago the Eyrsari Turkomans withdrew and returned to their own country on the banks of the Oxus, and a large number of Salor Turkomans arrived. The Salor having taken the part of Persia in one of the Persian invasions of the Merv country had to leave Yulatan, their original seat, and for a short time settled at Penjdeh. Soon after this the Saruk Turkomans were driven out of the Merv country by the Téké Turkomans, and the Saruk occupied both Yulatan, which was not Afghan soil, and Penjdeh, which has always been Afghan territory. The Salor gradually left Penjdeh, and at present there are only about 200 families of Salor Turkomans on Afghan soil. These are settled on the Kushk stream near its junction with the Murghab.

8. The Saruk and Salor settled at Penjdeh have always acknowledged that they are on Afghan soil, and have nearly always paid revenue in some form or other to the Afghan Government. When there have been troubles in Afghanistan they have paid little, or even a few years they have paid nothing. When the Afghan Government has been strong they have paid a regular tax. What they have paid has varied; sometimes it has been only a few horses, but they have always allowed their liability to pay a land tax of 2½ per cent. of their agricultural produce and one in forty of their cattle.

9. The state of things seems to have been that the Turkomans acknowledged that they were squatting on Afghan lands, and were liable to pay taxes, and each year they paid something as an acknowledgment of Afghan rights; but so long as this was done the Afghans looked upon them as a protection against the Téké further north, and left them very much to themselves. On several occasions they have supplied troops to the Afghan Government.

10. A Naib, or Deputy of the Governor of Herat, has generally resided amongst them. I give the names of some of the Naibs who have resided at Penjdeh during the last twelve or fifteen years. When Yakoub Khan was Governor at Herat for his father, Ameer Shere Ali Khan, his Naib in the Penjdeh district was Kafar Beg, of the Jamshedi tribe. In the time of Sirdar Eyoub Khan, Abdul Aziz Beg, Jamshedi, was the Naib. When Sirdar Abdul Kudus Khan was Governor of Herat he had a Deputy in the Penjdeh district for a short time. Last year Osman Khan was Deputy, and the Saruk and Salor agreed to pay a much larger revenue than they did before.

11. There are said to be thirty-eight jubs, or small irrigation canals, in Penjdeh. Each of these jubs was assessed at 25 Bokhara tillahs, or gold coins, worth about 13*s.* each. The Afghan Government was, on the other hand, to pay a Headman for the charge of each jub. As to grazing tax, it was agreed to be paid in money at 10 tengis (a tengii about 6*d.*) for every 100 sheep. I have not been able to ascertain how much of this tax was actually collected by Osman Khan, but a portion was actually paid. Osman Khan was expected to return through the Penjdeh country, and I have little doubt will soon be sent back to Penjdeh. I asked Téké Khan, the Chief of the Salor Turkoman tribe at Zohrabad in Persia, during how many years he thought nothing had been paid by the Turkomans of Penjdeh to the Afghan Government. He said that, taking a long period, perhaps in seven different years, nothing had been paid, but that they always acknowledged their liability to pay, and, except in those seven years, had always paid something. The population of the Penjdeh tract is stated by the Turkomans themselves to be 7,000 tents, but this is a gross exaggeration. I am informed by Hazaras that 4,000 tents, including the small body of Salor Turkomans, would be nearer the truth; 4,000 tents, at four persons to a tent, would represent 16,000 persons, and this is probably rather above the real population.

12. I have made many inquiries as to where the actual frontier of Afghanistan on

the Murghab is situated. Several people whom I have consulted, and who know the country well, are agreed on this point. It is said to be at Kala Byrun, or Kala Brun. Kala Brun is a bluff or hill some 12 or 13 miles south of the shrine marked on General Walker's Map as Imam Buksh, and the ruined caravanseri marked as Robat Abdulla Khan. One of my informants was Téké Khan, the Salor Chief, who with his tribe at one time lived at Penjdeh. Another, an old Mervee, who had been in the service of the last Khivan Governor of Merv, who was killed by the Saruk Turkomans shortly before the Téké took possession of the Merv country. The old man said every one knows the frontier of Afghanistan on the Murghab is Kala Brun. A line drawn from Kala Brun on the Murghab to the Heri-Rud just south of Naorozabad would seem to represent all that Afghanistan could fairly claim as her soil, and this would give a workable frontier on the Heri-Rud, as it would leave the low range of hills, which here forms the natural boundary of Afghanistan in Afghan hands.

13. The news of this frontier since my Report of the 12th instant is that General Komaroff started from Askabad for Merv, and reached the Russian camp on the Tejend, but there he heard that the people of Merv, in spite of the submission of their Chiefs, would not receive him, and were even ready to oppose his coming. He is negotiating with them about permitting him to go to Merv.

14. News was brought here two days ago that a party of Turkoman raiders had been seen by the Persian pickets on the other side of the Heri-Rud, and warning us to be prepared for a raid, but as yet nothing has been heard of the raiders: either it was a false alarm, or they have proceeded to the southward.

No. 30.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 11, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, May* 11, 1884.

PERSIAN Government declare that no proposal has been made to them by Russia for the cession of Sarakhs, nor would such a proposal be entertained by the Shah. Lands under Persian cultivation of right bank of river, referred to in my telegram of the 21st ultimo, which Russians threaten to occupy and to hand over to Merv Turkomans, include Old Sarakhs. Russian officials have informed the cultivators that they may secure this season's crop, but that their occupation of the land will then cease. Shah claims this territory as Persian, and objects strongly to its appropriation by the Russians.

It is stated that Russians intend to construct a new fort opposite to the Persian town of Sarakhs, which is on the left bank of the river.

No. 31.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 11, 1884.

STATEMENTS have appeared in the newspapers to the effect that Sarakhs has been ceded by Persia to Russia, and questions have consequently been addressed to Her Majesty's Government on the subject in both Houses of Parliament.

I have to request your Excellency to inform me whether there is any truth in the rumour.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 32.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 12.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, May* 7, 1884.

ON the 5th instant I called upon M. de Giers at his office, and said that I should on the next day send him a note informing him of the acceptance by Her Majesty's Government of the proposal made by his Excellency in 1882, and recently repeated, for the delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khodja Saleh westwards, and I asked him

at the same time whether he did not think it advisable that the same Commission which might be appointed to lay down that boundary should continue a similar work eastward even as far as Kashgaria, observing that that portion of the region was as little known and the boundary as ill-defined as the other. M. de Giers at once answered that he believed it would be very desirable, but would think over the subject before deciding upon it.

I again saw his Excellency this afternoon, and in alluding to my note said that it referred only to the boundary of Afghanistan from Khodja Saleh to the Tejend; but that if the Imperial Government should think it desirable that the same Commission which might be appointed to lay down that boundary should be subsequently employed in delimitating the north-eastern frontier from Khodja Saleh to the border of Kashgaria, I should be glad to ask your Lordship's permission to propose that the powers of the Commission should be enlarged for that purpose. Or did his Excellency think that it would be better to appoint another Commission which should work simultaneously on the eastern portion of the boundary with the Commission which was charged with the delimitation of the western part of it?

But with regard to the latter suggestion, M. de Giers expressed the opinion that the first thing to be done was to define the boundary between the Tejend and Khodja Saleh, and that by the time this was completed the Commission would have gained so much useful information that they would be much better qualified to carry on a similar work eastward.

M. de Giers, however, said that he would require a few days to consider the contents of my note in conjunction with the Minister of War, to whom a copy of it had been transmitted, and whom, as his Excellency added, it more particularly concerned. In doing so, the question of the delimitation of the eastern portion of the boundary might be borne in mind and examined.

No. 33.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, May 12.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 12, 1884.

IN consequence of your Lordship's telegram of yesterday's date, I have the honour to state that I called upon M. de Giers this afternoon, and that his Excellency assured me that Sarakhs on this or the west side of the Tedjend, at which there is a Persian garrison, and to which the Persian Government had recently sent a battalion, has not been, and will not be, ceded by Persia to Russia.

His Excellency added that the continuation of the boundary from Baba Durmaz, between Russian territory and Persia, will strike the Tedjend at a point north of Sarakhs.

What is called "Old Sarakhs" on the other or east side of the Tedjend consists, he says, of merely a few Turkoman huts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 34.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 14, 1884.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 28th ultimo, reporting the representations made by your Excellency to M. de Giers in accordance with the instructions contained in my telegram of the 24th on the subject of the alleged visit of Russian agents to places within Afghan territory.

Her Majesty's Government approve the language held by your Excellency, as well as the terms of the Memorandum on the subject which you gave to M. de Giers, copy of which is inclosed in the despatch referred to.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 35.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 12, 1884.*

IN the conversation which I had this afternoon with M. de Giers, he most positively disavowed any intention on the part of the Imperial Government to endeavour to obtain the cession by Persia of Sarakhs, which he said belonged to her, and would continue to do so. By this he meant the Sarakhs which was on this or the west side of the Tedjend, and which was garrisoned by Persian troops.

The place on the other side of the river, he says, is called "Old Sarakhs," and this I had previously understood from him had a Persian garrison; but it appears that I was mistaken, and that it is nothing more than a few huts inhabited by Turkomans, who cultivate the ground or feed their flocks in the neighbourhood.

M. de Giers added that it was to this latter place that General Komaroff recently went in order to endeavour to settle disputes which had arisen about the water supply.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 36.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 16, 12·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, May 16, 1884.*

THE Persian Government received yesterday a telegram from Meshed stating that the Russian Governor of Akhal and the Governor-General of the Caucasus reached Merv last week. It is said that the Governor-General will proceed towards the Herat frontier to visit the Chiefs of the Saryk tribe, whilst the Governor of Akhal is to remain at Merv for the present.

No. 37.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 21.)

My Lord, *Tehran, April 22, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, two letters containing interesting information concerning the proceedings of General Komaroff and the Russian troops quartered at Merv.

Your Lordship will observe that the army of occupation, estimated in the first Report as 1,800 men, with eight guns, is stated since the date of that letter to have been reinforced by 1,000 men and two heavy guns. The Commander-in-chief has built a fort at Koushid Kaleh, in the centre of the old fortified camp bearing the same name, and has stationed a force in the Merv Bazaar, a central position in which the whole of the commercial transactions of the Tékés of Merv are carried on. As a necessary consequence of the surrender of Merv, the Saryk Turkomans of Yuletan have sent their Elders to the Russian camp to tender their submission. On the other hand, Makhdum Kuli Khan, the Turkoman Chief, who lately brought about the surrender of Merv to the Russians, and who had been sent by General Komaroff to Penjdeh, to negotiate the submission of the Salor Turkomans, had been put off with an evasive answer, and an agent dispatched to Meimaneh had not yet returned when the Report was written. The Russian Commander-in-chief has released 400 Persians who were detained in captivity by the Saryk and Téké Turkomans.

It was rumoured that General Komaroff, with a force of 1,000 men, and a number of Merv Notables, was about to take possession of the lands on the right bank of the Heri-Rud opposite Sarakhs, which are now cultivated by the Persian inhabitants of that town. These lands the Merv Tékés have long sought to obtain, and it is said that they will now be made over to them by the Russian General.

It is also said that after having settled the question of the lands of Sarakhs the Russian Commander-in-chief intended to visit the Badghees districts and to proceed as far south as Toman Agha and Kafir Kaleh, two villages on the banks of the Heri-Rud, on the direct road to Herat from Sarakhs.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

(Translation.) *April* 5, 1884.

ON the 20th instant about eighty camels, loaded with stores, arrived at Dereghez from Askabad on their way to Merv. They were followed next day by a force of 600 infantry, with 50 or 60 Cossacks, and 4 guns. It is said that a regiment of infantry is at Gavers, also destined for Merv. All sorts of rumours are afloat with regard to the reception of the Russians at Merv. The probability is that their advanced guard met with some slight resistance at the outset. General Komaroff, it is said, has established a camp above the Merv dam, and the Saryk Turkomans have furnished him with abundance of provisions. The Merv Elders are reported to have held aloof for the first three days, after which they went to his camp and made submission. News has recently arrived that Komaroff has occupied the Merv Bazaar.

Sarakhs, March 28, 1884.

General Komaroff has established himself in the fortified camp of Kanshid Khan. His forces number about 1,800 men, cavalry and infantry, and he has eight guns with him. He is building a strong fort in the centre of the existing inclosure, at which a number of labourers are employed, each of whom receives wages at the rate of 3 tenjehs (about 1*s.* 6*d.*) a-day. The General is laying in large stores of grain, which he pays for at the rate asked by the Turkomans. Makhdum Kuli Khan has been sent to Penjdeh to bring in the Chiefs of the Saryk Turkomans. One of the Merv Notables, in whom confidence is placed, has been sent on a mission to the Vali of Meimaneh, who had previously sent a messenger to General Komaroff. The Russians propose to build a fort between Yuletan and Penjdeh. A silly Téké Turkoman drew his sword and attempted to strike General Komaroff. He was seized and sent to prison, but on his way there his brother killed him, to mark his indignation at the attempt. The Tékés have asked for the surrender of Sarakhs, but the Russian General has advised them to have patience. The Russians are enrolling Turkoman horsemen at a monthly pay of 7 tomans (about 2*l.* 7*s.*); they propose to raise a cavalry corps of 2,000 men. A monthly allowance has been allotted to the Merv Notables, in proportion to their position; the four following personages have received the title of Khan: (1) Makhdum Kuli Khan, of the Vekeel tribe; (2) Murad Khan, of the Amanshah tribe; (3) Sari Khan, of the Bakshi tribe; (4) Babli Khan, the son of Khanshid Khan, has been made Binbashi (Colonel) of the Téké horsemen. The Russians spend freely, and show great favour to the Merv Turkomans. They have placed the Merv cannon close to their camp, after filling up the touch-holes with melted lead. The General has offered service to that class of the population which generally lives by raids."

Inclosure 2 in No. 37.

(Translation.) *April* 12, 1884.

A MESSENGER had just returned from Merv (4th April), who reported the complete submission of the Mervis to the Russians. The Yuletan Elders and Notables had also come in and proffered obedience. Four hundred prisoners from Khorassan, who were in the hands of the Tékés and Saryks, had been made over to General Komaroff, who had set them at liberty. The Merv guns had been collected together at a point distant about 500 yards from the Russian camp at Kaushid Kaleh. One thousand Russian soldiers from Askabad, with two heavy guns and 500 camel-loads of ammunition, had also reached Merv. Twenty-five camel-loads of biscuits were brought in daily for the use of the soldiers.

The Agent (Makhdum Kuli Khan) sent by General Komaroff had returned to Merv from Penjdeh; the people of that place had stated that they were subject to Herat, that Afghan troops were close at hand, and therefore, if they sent their Elders to the Russian camp, the Herat soldiers would certainly molest them; they begged the Russian Commander to allow them time to communicate with the Herat authorities.

General Komaroff was said to have expressed an intention of going to Sarakhs with 1,000 horsemen, and even of proceeding as far south in the direction of Herat as Toman Agha and Kafir Kaleh. He was also said to have promised to take Baba Khan, the son of Kanshid Khan, to the opposite (right) bank of the Sarakhs River.

The Agent sent by General Komaroff to Meimaneh had not as yet returned.

The Russian Commander had given the Mervis permission to move in any direction they pleased with their sheep and camels, and some of their sheep were already grazing on the Sarakhs' lands (on the right bank of the Heri-Rud).

Caravans from Askabad were constantly bringing in goods to the Merv Bazaar, where the Russians had opened a number of shops and stores to receive them.

The new fort built by the Russians at Kaushid Kaleh is 1,200 Persian yards (of 40 inches) in circumference; it is surrounded by a ditch 7 yards in width and 4 yards in depth. The Russians had filled up the ditch of Kaushid Khan's fort, and talked of demolishing it entirely. Their behaviour amongst the Téké Turkomans would give the idea that Merv had been in their possession for the last thirty years. Biscuits and ammunition were being brought in daily from Askabad.

The Syapoosh Dervish and Kajar Khan had been imprisoned with their adherents.

The Chiefs of raiders had been organized into a species of constabulary.

The Chief of the Salor Turkomans had recently given notice that General Komaroff was leaving Merv with 1,000 men, accompanied by Baba Khan and other Notables, on his way to Sarakhs, to take possession of the lands on the right bank of the Sarakhs River, where the Kaushid and Afrasiab forts are situated, with the intention of making them over to the Téké Turkomans. As the chief portion of the land cultivated by the Persians of Sarakhs lies on that bank, and as they have already sown there upwards of 1,000 kharwars (650 lbs. each) of grain, it was considered essential to give immediate notice, and a Persian messenger, who was at Merv at the time, started at once with the news, which was communicated without delay from Sarakhs to the authorities at Meshed.

No. 38.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 21.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, April 22, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the Agreement concerning Eyoub Khan, which I signed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 17th instant under instructions received from your Lordship by telegraph.

In obedience to your Lordship's instructions, I have transmitted a copy of the Eyoub Khan Agreement to the Government of India.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Agreement respecting Detention of Eyoub Khan in Persia, dated April 17, 1884.

LES Soussignés, le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Sa Majesté le Schah de Perse, et l'Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté Britannique près la Cour de Perse, dûment autorisés à cet effet par leurs Gouvernements respectifs, sont convenus des dispositions suivantes :—

1. Le Gouvernement Persan fixera la résidence d'Eyoub Khan à Téhéran ou à Ispahan, ou à une autre localité également éloignée des frontières de Khorassan; les autres Chefs Afghans seront également éloignés des frontières de Khorassan.

2. Il sera payé annuellement au Gouvernement Persan, à l'ordre du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, par l'entremise de la Légation de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran, la somme de 8,000*l.* pour l'entretien d'Eyoub Khan et des autres Chefs Afghans, à partir du 1er Janvier, 1884. Le premier trimestre ne sera versé que le jour de l'arrivée d'Eyoub Khan au lieu qui lui sera désigné comme résidence, conformément au 1er Article.

3. Cet arrangement restera en vigueur pendant deux ans à partir du 1er Janvier, 1884, à moins que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Gouvernement Persan ne conviennent d'un commun accord d'en faire cesser les effets avant cette époque, et pourra être prolongé au delà de cette date par un accord mutuel entre le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Gouvernement Persan.

Fait à Téhéran, en double expédition, le 17 Avril, 1884.

(L.S.) MAHMOUD.
(L.S.) RONALD F. THOMSON.

(Translation.)

THE Undersigned, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of His Majesty the Shah of Persia and the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty at the Court of Persia, duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments have agreed on the following provisions :—

1. The Persian Government shall fix the residence of Eyoub Khan at Tehran or Ispahan, or at some other place equally remote from the frontiers of Khorassan; the other Afghan Chiefs shall also be removed from the frontiers of Khorassan.

2. There shall be paid annually to the Persian Government to the order of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, through Her Britannic Majesty's Legation at Tehran, the sum of 8,000*l.* for the maintenance of Eyoub Khan and the other Afghan Chiefs from the 1st January, 1884. The first quarter shall not be paid until the day on which Eyoub Khan reaches the place which shall have been assigned to him as a residence in accordance with the Ist Article.

3. This arrangement shall remain in force for two years from the 1st January, 1884, unless Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Persian Government should agree to annul it before that time, and it may be prolonged beyond that date by a mutual agreement between Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Persian Government.

Done at Tehran, in duplicate, the 17th April, 1884.

(L.S.) MAHMOUD.
(L.S.) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 39.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 21.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, May* 17, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a new map has just been published of Asiatic Russia with the adjoining countries. It has been compiled and constructed by the Military Topographical Department of the Chief Staff Office, and is declared to be official.

The inclosed Memorandum shows how the boundary-line drawn in this map encroaches on Afghan territory.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Memorandum.

THE blue line on the accompanying map of the Akhal Téké and Merv Oasis gives the latest tracing of the frontiers of Persia and Afghanistan, as determined by the Topographical Department of the General Staff.

The officials of that Department pretend that this frontier does not necessarily indicate the possessions of Russia, but that it gives the boundaries of Persia and Afghanistan as claimed by those States themselves towards Turkomania.

The frontier from Baba Durmaz follows the mountain range forming the south-western boundary of the Atek, leaving Lutfabad and Kelat-i-Nadiri to Persia, but depriving them of the control of the streams watering the Atek. The frontier then strikes the Tejend just north of the Persian fortress of Sarakhs, and without crossing the river follows the Tejend (Heri-Rud) up to a point about 30 kilom. north of Kusan, whence, leaving the river, it follows the ridge of the Parapomisus as far as the Pass of Ardawan, about 26 kilom. (less than 20 miles) to the north of Herat.

The frontier then turns due north along the road leading to Merv, crosses the Kushk at Tchil Douchter, follows the right bank up to within 7 kilom. south of Kalé Maour, turns then to the east, passes 15 kilom. to the south of Meroutchak, 25 kilom. to the north of Maimaneh, 8 kilom. to the north of Ankoi, and joins the Amou Daria at Khodja Saleh.

This frontier is based chiefly on the surveys of M. Lessar, and is in accordance with the ethnographical frontier theory in favour, by which nomadic Turkomans are under the exclusive influence of Russia.

The General Staff Office is now engaged on a grand map of the region of the Pamirs. It has been decided to extend the frontier of Wakkan northwards across the Oxus (Pendjeh) to the range of mountains which would then form the southern boundary of Bokhara, also under the influence of Russia.

Russian maps prepared by the General Staff are generally allowed to be published, and become official by lapse of time unless protested against. The map now in question, from which the blue tracing is taken, is, however, admittedly official.

The Persian and Afghan frontiers have already been surveyed by Russia, excepting perhaps on the extreme north-east of Afghanistan.

St. Petersburgh, May 16, 1884.

No. 40.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 17, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 7th instant, in which I had the honour to inform your Lordship that I had transmitted a note to M. de Giers embodying the contents of your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo relating to the delimitation of the Afghanistan boundary from Khodja Saleh to the Tedjend, I now inclose copy of his Excellency's reply.

In this note he states that the Imperial Government are entirely disposed to name a Commissioner who should visit, in concert with a British colleague, the countries in question, and should seek jointly with him the elements of a line of frontier which may satisfy the respective interests of the two Powers.

But at the same time M. de Giers conveys the objections of his Government to the appointment of an Afghan Commissioner for the same purpose, although they consider that such a person might be called upon as an expert to give local information when asked for it by the Commission.

M. de Giers further expresses the opinion that other experts might also be selected from the populations in those regions, who might be interested in the measures which the two Powers would be called upon to take at the time of the delimitation of the boundary.

I shall await your Lordship's further instructions with regard to the suggestions thus made by M. de Giers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 40.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Département Asiatique,
M. l'Ambassadeur, *le* 3 *Mai,* 1884.

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'adresser en date du 24 Avril (6 Mai), pour m'annoncer l'accueil que ma note du 17 (29) Mars dernier, au sujet de l'annexion de Merv au territoire de l'Empire, a trouvé auprès du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine.

C'est avec une vive satisfaction que j'ai constaté que le Cabinet de Londres, étant, de son côté, résolu à respecter les arrangements conclus antérieurement entre les deux Gouvernements relativement à l'Asie Centrale, considère une entente amicale comme le moyen le plus sûr de prévenir des complications, et qu'il partage entièrement l'avis du Cabinet de Sa Majesté l'Empereur quant à l'opportunité de la fixation d'une ligne de démarcation qui séparerait l'Afghanistan des territoires placés sous l'influence de la Russie.

Votre Excellence a bien voulu me faire savoir en même temps que le Cabinet de Londres serait d'avis que les parties principales de la ligne de démarcation devraient être fixées sur les lieux par une Commission dont les opérations pourraient commencer l'automne prochain.

Je m'empresse de vous informer, M. l'Ambassadeur, que le Cabinet Impérial est tout disposé à nommer un Commissaire qui aurait à visiter, avec son collègue de la Grande-Bretagne, les contrées qu'il s'agirait de délimiter, et à rechercher, de concert avec lui, les éléments du tracé d'une frontière de nature à satisfaire les intérêts respectifs des deux Puissances. Pour ce qui est du fonctionnaire Afghan, dont il est fait mention dans votre note du 24 Avril (6 Mai), je me fais un devoir de vous prévenir que, dans l'opinion du Cabinet Impérial, ce fonctionnaire ne saurait être adjoint à la Commission de Délimitation qu'à titre d'expert, pour fournir des éclaircissements sur des questions de détail et d'un caractère purement local, lorsque les Commissaires des deux Puissances se trouveraient dans le cas de le consulter. Il est, d'ailleurs, à prévoir que les Commissaires pourront

difficilement se dispenser de consulter aussi d'autres experts qui seraient choisis parmi l e peuplades établies dans ces parages ou dont les intérêts ne sauraient être entièremen séparés des dispositions que les deux Puissances seront appelées à prendre lors de la délimitation. Quant aux négociations qui auraient pour objet le tracé de la ligne de démarcation, il semblerait, vu la nature délicate de cette question, qu'il serait au plus haut point inopportun d'y admettre l'intervention d'individus qui ne sauraient sans de graves inconvénients être initiés aux intérêts politiques qui s'y rattachent. Le réglement d'intérêts de cette nature ne pourrait être confié qu'à des fonctionnaires possédant une grande expérience et qui jouiraient de l'entière confiance de leurs Gouvernements respectifs.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asiatic Department,
M. l'Ambassadeur, *May* 3, 1884.

I HAVE received the note your Excellency was good enough to address to me on the 24th April (6th May) to inform me of the manner in which my note of the 17th (29th) March last on the subject of the annexation of Merv to the territory of the Empire was received by the Government of Her Majesty the Queen.

It is with great satisfaction that I learn that the Cabinet of London being resolved on its part to respect the arrangements formerly made between the two Governments relative to Central Asia, consider that a friendly understanding is the surest means of avoiding complications, and that they are entirely of the opinion of the Cabinet of His Majesty the Emperor with regard to the expediency for fixing a line of demarcation which would separate Afghanistan from the territories placed under the influence of Russia.

Your Excellency was good enough to inform me at the same time that the Cabinet of London was of opinion that the principal points of the line of frontier should be settled on the spot by a Commission which might begin operations next autumn.

I hasten to inform you that the Imperial Cabinet is quite ready to appoint a Commissioner to visit, in company with his English colleague, the districts to be delimitated, and in concert with him to endeavour to ascertain the principles under which a frontier-line might be traced which would satisfy the respective interests of the two Powers. As regards the Afghan official, of whom mention is made in your note of the 24th April (6th May), I beg to inform you that the Imperial Cabinet are of opinion that such an official could only be attached to the Boundary Commission as an expert to furnish explanations on questions of detail and purely local matters whenever the Commissioners of the two Powers might wish to consult him. It will, besides, probably turn out that the Commissioners will hardly be able to dispense with consulting other experts who would be chosen from among the tribes settled in those parts, and whose interests could not be considered entirely outside the provisions which the two Powers will have to make on the occasion of the delimitation. As regards the negotiations for the purpose of tracing a line of demarcation it would seem that, in view of the delicate nature of the question, it would be most unadvisable to admit the intervention of persons to whom the political interests involved could not, without grave inconvenience, be confided. The settlement of interests of this nature could only be intrusted to officials possessed of large experience and in possession of the entire confidence of their respective Governments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 41.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 26.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 21, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 17th instant respecting the lately published Map of Russia in Asia which I mentioned therein, I have to state to your Lordship that I pointed out to M. de Giers what purported to be the north-western boundary of Afghanistan, especially where it approaches very nearly to Herat, and observed that the territory between the Murghab and the Heri-Rud, as far north as Sarakhs, could not be considered as part of the Merv territory, but must rather belong to Afghanistan. His Excellency replied that, although very little was known of that region, it was supposed

that it was occupied by independent Turkoman tribes, who acknowledged allegiance neither to Merv nor to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 42.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 28, 1884.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 21st instant relative to the recently published Map of the Russian possessions in Asia, and reporting a conversation which you held on the subject with M. de Giers.

I regret that his Excellency should have appeared to give his countenance to the boundaries laid down on this Map, and although I have no wish to prejudge the precise line of division between the Turkoman territory and Afghanistan, I think it desirable that you should state to M. de Giers that Her Majesty's Government fear that, if such views are put forward, the success of the negotiations which are about to be entered into by the two Governments may be endangered.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 43.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29, 2·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, May* 29, 1884, 1·47 P.M.

I HEAR from Herat that a Russian agent named Kniaz has been arrested at Rushas, and brought to Herat by the Afghan authorities, where he was detained ostensibly as a prisoner, pending reference to the Ameer. This is, probably, the same person who interfered with Mr. Stephen's movements in the Atek of Khelat.

No. 44.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 9.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 3, 1884.

A LETTER from the correspondent of the "Novoe Obozrenie" newspaper, reproduced in the "Kavkaz" of the 27th ultimo, states that the Major of Militia, Makhtum Kuli Khan (son of Nur Verdy), who was at Moscow during the Coronation, and who served as the medium of communication between the Merv Chiefs and General Komaroff, has been appointed Chief of the Tedjend district.

It adds that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, when receiving a deputation of inhabitants of Askabad, informed them that the Trans-Caspian Railway will be continued from Kyzil-Arvat to Askabad.

The Khans and Elders of the Saryk Turkomans were presented to the Prince on the 3rd ultimo.

A telegram from Tashkend of the 28th ultimo is published in the Russian newspapers here of the 29th ultimo, to the effect that a commercial factory is being established on the right bank of the Oxus, near the Bokharian fort of Ustyk, and on the direct road from Bokhara to Merv.

Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff arrived at Baku on the 30th ultimo, on his return from Merv.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 45.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 12.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 9, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation, by Mr. Michell, of a telegram which appeared in the St. Petersburgh (Russian) newspapers of yesterday, reporting that the Saryk Turkomans had taken the oath of allegiance to the Czar at Askabad, in the presence of Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, Governor-General of the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Newspaper Extract.

(Translation.)

THE Russian newspapers of St. Petersburgh published this day contain the following telegram of the Northern Telegraph Agency:—

"*Tiflis, May* 26 (*June* 8).—According to a description given by the 'Kavkaz' newspaper of the journey of the Commander-in-chief in the Trans-Caspian region, it appears that the Saryk Deputies waited two weeks at Askabad the arrival of Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff for the purpose of swearing allegiance to Russia. Before the oath was administered the Prince explained to them that the White Czar, having innumerable subjects and vast territories, did not require the annexation of the insignificant Saryk patch of ground, but that he only accepted them as subjects as an act of special grace towards them, in order to save them from disorder. The Deputies, with Sary Khan at their head, returned thanks for the favour shown them, and promised unmurmuring obedience to all orders."

St. Petersburgh, June 8, 1884.

No. 46.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June 17, 1884.*

HER Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the note from M. de Giers of the 3rd (15th) ultimo, of which a copy was inclosed in your despatch of the 17th, respecting the proposed Commission for the demarcation of the Afghan frontier.

Her Majesty's Government concur in the views set forth by M. de Giers as to the constitution of the Commission, and I have to authorize your Excellency so to inform his Excellency, and to propose to him that the Commissioners should meet, on the 1st October next, at Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Heri-Rud.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 47.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 18.)

My Lord, *Tehran, May 23, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith extracts of Reports from Colonel Stewart.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 47.

Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart to Sir O. Burne.

(Extract.) *Shahr-i-Nao, April* 9, 1884.

SINCE my Report of the 2nd April the news of this frontier has been as follows:—

It is reported from Merv that the Russians have seized the Dervish Siah Posh, and that the Russian General is about to send a small expedition under Lieutenant Alikhanoff to Penjdeh, and up the Kushk stream as far as Pul-i-Khisti. Most of the Saruk Turkoman Chiefs of Penjdeh are at present at Herat.

2. I have ascertained that the revenue actually collected last year by the Afghan authorities from the Turkomans of Penjdeh was 13,000 krans. A kran is worth about 9*d*.

Inclosure 2 in No. 47.

Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart to the Secretary to the Government of India.

(Extract.) *Meshed, April* 19, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to report that the news of the Persian-Afghan frontier since the date of my last Report of the 25th March, forwarded viâ Herat, is as follows:—

General Komaroff having completed a small fort at Merv, not far from Kala Koushid Khan, placed in it a weak battalion of infantry, some 200 Cossacks, and from four to six guns. He also entertained 200 Téké horsemen, and promised to entertain 200 more. He appointed Lieutenant Maksud Alikhanoff Governor of the Merv country. A Russian Mahommedan of the Lesgi tribe of the Caucasus was appointed Russian Governor of Yuletan. General Komaroff then sent back the best of the troops he had with him viâ the Tejend to Askabad, and himself, accompanied by fifty Cossacks and some Téké horsemen, went to the small Persian fort on the eastern side of the Tejend, 7 miles from Sarakhs, repeatedly mentioned in my correspondence. He found it occupied by forty Persian soldiers, whom he ordered to leave. He stayed there two nights, and warned the cultivators that this was now Russian soil, and that though they would be permitted to reap the crop now on the ground, they would not be permitted to sow any more fields on the eastern side of the Tejend. This is very hard on Persia, as almost all the lands capable of irrigation are on the eastern side of the Tejend, and if the Persians are not permitted to cultivate there, it will be hardly worth their while to hold Sarakhs at all. General Komaroff then went to Askabad viâ Chacha.

On the 24th March a Russian engineer, accompanied by two Nogan Tartars and eight Téké horsemen, came to Pul-i-Khisti, the brick bridge across the Kushk stream, not far from its junction with the Murghab. He pitched his tent there, and then went to Ardan, a place in the Penjdeh district. Here he asked the people whose subjects they were. They all answered subjects of Ameer Abdurrahman Khan. Abdul Mohsin Khan, the Afghan Agent in Penjdeh, hearing of the Russian's arrival, went to him and asked him why he had come on to Afghan territory. The Russian said he was travelling along the frontier, and had lost his way. On the 26th he was seen by the Afghan cavalry pickets thrown out from Kushk near the well of Islim, which is on the road to Ak Robat. He asked the Afghan pickets not to report his movements to the Afghan authorities at Kushk. He made inquiries from them about Bala Murghab and Meimaneh, and then went over the country crossed by M. Lessar the year before last, and visited by me last year, to Sarakhs, where he met General Komaroff.

The Saryk Turkomans at Penjdeh have been startled by this visit of the Russian, and they have written to Yalantush Khan at Bala Murghab asking that some one in authority from the Ameer should be placed at Penjdeh to prevent Russian visitors coming there, as the Saryk unaided were unable to prevent Russians from coming there. Many of the Saryk Turkoman Chiefs of Penjdeh who were in Herat have received dresses of honour from the Governor of Herat, and have been dismissed to their homes.

Under orders received from the Ameer, one regiment of Herat infantry, 200 cavalry, and six guns, under the command of Brigadier-General Zabberdast Khan, started on the 10th April for Meimaneh. Yalantush Khan, the Jamshedi Chief, with 500 irregular

cavalry and 200 footmen from Bala Murghab, has been ordered to join this force. Sirdar Ishak Khan, it is also believed, has marched from Turkestan to Meimaneh. A skirmish has taken place near a place called Chahar Shambeh between the troops of the Wali of Meimaneh and the Meimaneh Chiefs who had been sent forward from Herat, and the result of the skirmish was favourable to the Ameer's party.

No. 48.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 18, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, June* 18, 1884, 3·52 P.M.

I HEAR that 300 Russian horse have taken possession of Hissari-Koushid, on the Old Sarakhs side of river, and have ejected the Persian guards by whom it was occupied.

No. 49.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 23.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 16, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of a telegram from Tiflis, published in the Russian newspapers of the 14th instant, relating to the delimitation of the frontier between Russian territory and Afghanistan.

It alludes to the conflict now going on between the Afghans and the Mongol tribe on the Upper Murghab, and expresses the opinion that much will depend upon the determination of the Salor Turkomans, who are to the north of this tribe and to the south of the Saryk Turkomans, either to join the Afghans or to come under Russian rule. The writer considers that the Paropamisus range is the natural frontier between the Trans-Caspian region and Afghanistan.

I also inclose a translation of an extract from the "Moscow Gazette" of the 15th instant, giving the area and population of the territory recently annexed to Russia. Your Lordship will observe the statement that it extends to the frontier of Afghanistan, "about 60 versts (or 40 miles) from Herat."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 49.

Telegram in Russian Newspapers of June 1 (13), 1884.

(Translation.)

THE following telegram, dated Tiflis, the 1st (13th) June, 1884, is published in the Russian press of this day:—

"Commenting on the discussion in the English press regarding the delimitation of a Russo-Afghan frontier, the 'Kavkaz' newspaper makes the following remarks:—

"'The conditions of the impending delimitation of a frontier between ourselves and Afghanistan will depend on the results of the conflict in which the Afghans are at present engaged with the sole independent tribe of Mongols inhabiting the valley of the Upper Murghab. Between these Mongols and Merv is the tribe of Salor Turkomans, and it rests with these latter, in view of the voluntary submission of the Saryk Turkomans to Russia, to solve the dilemma, either by joining the Afghans, or by following the example of the rest of their compatriots, and coming under Russian rule. The natural frontier between the Trans-Caspian region and Afghanistan can only be the Paropamisus range, a continuation of the Sefid-Kukh chain, to the north of which, according to the testimony of all travellers, the influence of Afghanistan has never *de facto* extended, the Turkomans and Uzbeks inhabiting that part being either totally independent, or at times more or less under the influence of Khiva and Bokhara.'"

St. Petersburgh, June 2 (14), 1884.

Inclosure 2 in No. 49.

Extract from the "Moscow Gazette" of June 3 (15), 1884.

(Translation.)

THE "Moscow Gazette" of the 3rd (15th) June, 1884, publishes the following information, sent by its correspondent at Tiflis, relative to the Trans-Caspian region:—

"The newly-acquired territory has an area of about 3,600 square versts, contains 200,000 inhabitants, and extends to the frontier of Afghanistan, about 60 versts from Herat; that portion of the Trans-Caspian region which was annexed earlier contains about 6,000 square miles, with 141,000 inhabitants. Makhtum Kuli Khan, son of the famous Nur Verdy Khan, has been appointed Chief of the Tejend district. Ancient Merv is in ruins and has been abandoned, the inhabitants having settled at the Aul of Koshut-Khan-Kala, a distance of about 40 versts.

"Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff promised the inhabitants of Askabad that the Trans-Caspian Railway would shortly be extended from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad. It seems that the railway will be continued in sections as far as Herat, and that the construction of a railway to Tehran viâ Resht is being contemplated by the Trans-Caucasian Railway Company. Telegraphic communication is at present being established between Askabad and Merv."

St. Petersburgh, June 4 (16), 1884.

No. 50.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 25, 1·40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, June* 25, 1884, 1·35 P.M.

EYOUB KHAN and 120 followers arrived here yesterday. Principal Chiefs with him are Moosa Khan, Loniab, and Sipah Salar. Two have remained in Couldchan with his family and sufficient followers. A full list of the Chiefs interned will be sent shortly.

No. 51.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 23, 1884.

I RECEIVED on the evening of the 21st instant the Memorandum of which I have the honour to inclose a copy. It was unaccompanied by a note, and, as will be seen, has neither date nor signature, though it purports to have been addressed to me by the Russian Foreign Office. I have not, since I received it, had an opportunity of seeing either M. de Giers or M. Vlangaly, but I shall take an early opportunity of calling the attention of one of these gentlemen to the form of the communication, which appears to me to be unusual.

The Memorandum sets forth that the Emir Abdur Rahman intends to send a force to take possession of Penjdeh, which it states is inhabited by Saryk Turkomans. It adds that this news is confirmed by an article in the "Times" of the 9th instant, which, if it means the 9th June, I am unable to find.

The Memorandum protests against this intention, as inconsistent with the understanding which has just been established between the two Powers for the delimitation of the frontier from Khodja-Saleh westward.

In consequence of the observations which are made at the end of the inclosed Memorandum with regard to Shignan and Roshan, I shall take an early opportunity of making a statement to M. de Giers in accordance with what your Lordship authorized me to say in your despatch of the 29th April last. I had refrained from doing so, because I feared that it might contribute to the failure of the negotiation for the appointment of a Commission for considering the question of the northern boundary of Afghanistan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Memorandum.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères vient d'être informé par les autorités de la Province Transcaspienne que, suivant les bruits parvenus de Hérat, l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan se proposerait d'envoyer quelques bataillons à Pendjdé pour prendre possession de cette localité habitée par des Turcomans Saryks. Cette information est confirmée par un article paru dans le "Times" du 9 courant, lequel tout en reconnaissant la nécessité d'une entente entre la Russie et l'Angleterre au sujet du tracé de la frontière Afghane dans ces parages, n'en prétend pas moins que l'Émir Abdourrahman serait tenu de convertir préalablement Pendjdé ainsi que quelques autres localités en points fortifiés Afghans dans le but d'assurer l'exercice de son autorité dans la direction du nord-ouest.

Le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères ne saurait considérer ce point de vue comme correct, et il se croit, en conséquence, en devoir de signaler à l'attention de M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre les considérations suivantes.

Lors des négociations qui ont abouti à la fixation des frontières nord et nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan il avait été convenu entre les Cabinets de St. Pétersbourg et de Londres que l'on considérerait les territoires en la possession effective de Schir-Ali-Khan comme formant les limites de l'Afghanistan. Ce n'est que poussée par un sentiment de déférence envers la Grande-Bretagne et eu égard à l'engagement qu'avait pris cette Puissance d'user de toute son influence pour empêcher l'Émir de l'Afghanistan de se livrer à des agressions et à des enquêtes ultérieures, que le Cabinet Impérial a cru pouvoir se désister des objections qu'il avait formulées d'abord contre l'annexion aux possessions de l'Émir des Provinces de Badakshan et de Vakhan, lesquelles, à cette époque, jouissaient pourtant d'une certaine indépendance. L'entente qui vient de s'établir entre les deux Puissances au sujet de la délimitation de la frontière depuis Khodja Saleh dans la direction de l'ouest est destinée à compléter l'arrangement conclu en 1872-73. Le Cabinet Impérial a eu soin de préciser ce point de vue dans sa note du 17 Mars, 1884, et il regretterait d'autant plus de voir l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan méconnaître les bases de l'arrangement en question, que ce n'est point dans une extension de ses propres possessions, mais bien plutôt dans une entente amicale entre les deux Grandes Puissances, basée sur une appréciation équitable de leurs intérêts respectifs, que l'Émir trouvera la meilleure garantie de la sécurité de ses États.

Le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères ne saurait non plus laisser passer la présente occasion sans rappeler à M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre le contenu du Mémoire qui a été remis à son Excellence au mois de Décembre 1883, et qui a eu pour objet des entreprises dirigées par le Khan de Badakshan contre l'intégrité et l'independance de Shougnan et de Roushan. Cette inconstance étant de nature à offrir une grande importance au point de vue des arrangements conclus entre ces deux Puissances, le Ministère Impérial désirerait vivement s'assurer que les considérations contenues dans le Mémoire en question n'ont pas été perdues de vue par le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs has just been informed by the authorities of the Transcaspian Province that according to rumours which have come from Herat the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan is thinking of sending several battalions to Penjdeh to take possession of that place, which is inhabited by Saryk Turkomans. This information is confirmed by an article which appeared in the "Times" of the 9th instant, which, while recognizing the necessity of an understanding between Russia and England with regard to the tracing of the Afghan frontier in these parts, maintains at the same time that the Ameer Abdurrahman ought first to convert Penjdeh and some other places into fortified Afghan ports, in order to insure his authority towards the north-west.

The Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot but consider this view as incorrect, and is consequently desirous of pointing out to the attention of the English Ambassador the following considerations.

At the time of the negotiations which resulted in the settlement of the north and north-west frontiers of Afghanistan, the Cabinets of St. Petersburgh and London agreed that the territories at that time actually in possession of Shere Ali Khan should be considered as forming the boundaries of Afghanistan. It was only out of deference to Great Britain, and in consequence of the engagement which that Power entered into to use all its influence to prevent the Ameer of Afghanistan from committing aggressions and making

inquiries with ulterior objects that the Imperial Cabinet abandoned the objections which it had at first raised to the annexation by the Ameer of the Provinces of Badakshan and Wakhan, which at that time, moreover, enjoyed a certain amount of independence. The understanding which has just been come to by the two Powers on the subject of the delimitation of the frontier from Khodja-Saleh westward is intended to complete the arrangement made in 1872-73. The Imperial Cabinet was careful in its note of the 17th March, 1884, to put forward with precision this point of view, and they would therefore the more regret that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan should ignore the bases of the arrangement in question, as it is not in an extension of his own possessions, but much more in a friendly understanding between the two Great Powers, based on an equitable appreciation of their respective interests, that the Ameer will find the best guarantee for the security of his States.

The Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot allow the present occasion to pass without reminding the English Ambassador of the contents of the Memorandum handed to his Excellency in December 1883, the subject-matter of which was the efforts the Khan of Badakshan was making against the integrity and independence of Shignan and Roushan. As this inconsistency is a matter of great importance, in view of the arrangements made by the two Powers, the Imperial Ministry is most anxious to learn that the considerations set forth in the Memorandum in question have not been lost sight of by Her Majesty's Government.

No. 52.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received June* 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 24, 1884.

I WENT yesterday to Gatchina to call upon M. de Giers, and during my visit told him of the undated and unsigned Memorandum which I had received from his office on the evening of the 21st instant, and said that its form was somewhat unusual. M. de Giers replied that the truth was that he had intended to speak to me on that day on the subject of the expedition which it was supposed the Ameer of Afghanistan was about to send to Penjdeh, and to hand me the Memorandum in question, which was in an unofficial form, as he did not wish to make an official communication upon the subject. When he saw me, however, at his office, the document was not yet ready, and as he immediately afterwards started for Gatchina, it was sent to me without any comment.

With regard to the alleged intention of the Ameer of Afghanistan to send an expedition to Penjdeh, I said that though there was a short article in the "Times" of the 9th instant relating to the frontier on the north-west of Afghanistan, there was no mention in it of Penjdeh. I had not, however, the newspaper with me, and M. de Giers expressed his belief that it was as it had been stated in the Memorandum, and added that the article had been cut out and sent to the Emperor.

But even if it were so, I urged that Penjdeh had always been considered to be within Afghan territory, and that there was no reason whatever why the Ameer should not send a force there if he deemed it expedient. But M. de Giers contested its belonging to Afghanistan, and expressed his belief that it had never been under the rule of the Ameers of that country. He thought, therefore, that as it was doubtful under whose jurisdiction it really was, and as the establishment of a Boundary Commission was now being negotiated, the decision of the question had better be left to that Commission.

As in the Memorandum allusion is made to the observations which were submitted by the Russian Government with regard to the operations against Shighnan and Roshan, I think it will be now advisable to make a communication to M. de Giers in the language which your Lordship, in your despatch of the 29th April last, authorized me to use, and I shall therefore transmit to his Excellency to-morrow the note of which I have the honour to inclose a copy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

P.S.—I find that the article in the "Times" is really in the number of the 9th instant, but it is in the Supplement, which I had not then seen.

E. T.

Inclosure in No. 52.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, June* 13 (25), 1884.

YOUR Excellency has recently reminded me of the Memorandum which was given to me by M. Vlangaly in December 1883 relating to the steps taken by the Khan of Badakshan against Shougnan and Roshan, and has expressed the hope that the observations made in that Memorandum had not been lost sight of by Her Majesty's Government.

In reply, I am authorized to state to your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government are most anxious to meet the wishes of the Imperial Government in maintaining tranquillity on the Shougnan-Darwaz frontier, but it seems that the Ameer of Afghanistan considers that Shougnan and Roshan are part of Badakshan, which was formally declared in 1872-73 to belong to Afghanistan. The information, however, as yet in the possession of the Indian Government, is not sufficient to enable them to pronounce a decided opinion on the subject. But Her Majesty's Government would be happy to consider the question in concert with the Russian Government, and to send a Commissioner to make an investigation on the spot jointly with a Russian and Afghan Commissioner.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 53.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July* 1, 1884, 4·45 P.M.

INFORM me by telegraph whether Russian Government have replied to proposal made in my despatch of 17th June respecting Afghan boundary.

No. 54.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 2, 1884.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform you that I yesterday forwarded by post M. de Giers' reply to the proposal contained in your despatch of the 17th instant, respecting the Afghan frontier.

It accepts the proposal in general terms, but suggests that the demarcation of the boundary should be begun at Khodja Saleh, and that any difference of opinion which may arise between the Commissioners should be immediately notified to their respective Governments. M. de Giers also invites Her Majesty's Government to communicate further practical details.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 55.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 1, 1884.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 17th ultimo, I have the honour to state that on the 23rd ultimo I addressed a note to M. de Giers, conveying to his Excellency the substance of that despatch, relating to the appointment of a Commission for the delimitation of the north-west boundary of Afghanistan. A copy of this note I have the honour to inclose, as also of M. de Giers' answer, which I received last night.

As your Lordship will perceive, his Excellency states that his Government see no objection to the meeting of the Commissioners at Sarakhs, but suggests that it should

rather take place at Khodja Saleh, which should be taken as the point of departure of the Afghan frontier.

M. de Giers invites Her Majesty's Government to give their opinion upon this and other points, with regard to which a preliminary understanding would conduce to preventing delays in the work of delimitation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 55.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, June* 11 (23), 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration your note of the 3rd (15th) ultimo respecting the proposed Commission for the demarcation of the Afghan frontier.

I am now instructed by Earl Granville to acquaint your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government concur in the views set forth in the above-mentioned note as to the constitution of the Commission, and to propose to the Imperial Government that the Commissioners should meet on the 1st October next at Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Heri-Rud.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 55.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, le* 18 *Juin*, 1884.

PAR sa note en date du 11 (23) courant votre Excellence a bien voulu m'annoncer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine est disposé à partager les vues du Cabinet Impérial consignées dans la note du 3 (15) Mai dernier, quant à la composition de la Commission qui aura à délimiter la frontière de l'Afghanistan.

Je ne puis que me féliciter de ce résultat, qui me fait espérer que, grâce à l'entente qui vient de s'établir entre elles, les deux Puissances ne tarderont pas à arriver à une solution satisfaisante de cette importante question, ce qui contribuera à consolider les liens d'amitié qui les unissent, et à assurer le succès de la mission humanitaire et civilisatrice que chacun d'elles est appelée à poursuivre dans sa sphère d'action respective.

Ainsi qu'il résulte de votre note précitée, M. l'Ambassadeur, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine est d'avis que les Commissaires respectifs devraient se trouver vers le 1er du mois d'Octobre prochain à Sarakhs, sur la rive gauche du Heri-Rud.

Le Cabinet Impérial ne voit aucun inconvénient à se ranger à cet avis, mais d'un autre côté il lui semblerait utile que préalablement à l'envoi des Commissaires sur les lieux, les deux Gouvernements procédassent à un échange de vues sur les bases générales de la prochaine délimitation, afin de prévenir autant que possible les divergences d'opinions et les malentendus qui pourraient surgir entre les Commissaires et entraver la marche de leurs travaux.

Ainsi que j'ai eu l'honneur de le constater dans ma note du 17 Mars dernier, dans l'opinion du Cabinet Impérial la prochaine délimitation est destinée à compléter l'arrangement antérieurement intervenu entre les deux Gouvernements et dont les bases ont été consignées dans la dépêche adressée pas le Comte Granville à Lord Loftus en date du 17 Octobre, 1872, ainsi que dans la dépêche du Prince Gortchacow au Comte Brunnow du 12 Janvier, 1873. De votre côté, dans votre Acte du 24 Avril (6 Mai) vous avez bien voulu me donner l'assurance que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine est également résolu à respecter tous les arrangements antérieurs.

La dépêche précitée du Comte Granville, qui contient une définition de la frontière nord et nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan, établit, entre autres, que c'est le poste de Khodja-Saleh qui forme l'extrémité des possessions de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan sur l'Amou-Daria, et qu'en aval de cette localité l'Émir n'a rien à réclamer. Cette indica-

tion étant donnée, le Cabinet Impérial est d'avis que c'est Khodja-Saleh que la Commission devrait adopter comme point de départ de la frontière de l'Afghanistan et que, pour ce qui est du tracé ultérieur de cette frontière, les Commissaires auront à se conformer aux autres indications contenues dans la dépêche du Comte Granville, ainsi qu'aux données qui seraient recueillies par eux sur les lieux. Les Commissaires seraient, entre autres, tenus de signaler sans retard à leurs Gouvernements respectifs tous les points sur lesquels une divergence d'opinion se produirait entre eux. En me faisant un devoir de signaler ces observations à l'attention de votre Excellence, je viens la prier de vouloir bien les porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine.

Je vous serais très reconnaissant, M. l'Ambassadeur, si vous voudriez avoir l'obligeance de me faire connaître un moment plus tôt l'avis du Cabinet de Londres quant aux points ci-dessus exposés, ainsi qu'à d'autres sur lesquels une entente préalable serait d'une grande utilité pratique et contribuerait efficacement à prévenir les retards qu'en cas contraire pourraient subir les travaux de délimitation.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Department for Foreign Affairs, June* 18, 1885.

BY your note of the 11th (23rd) instant your Excellency was good enough to inform me that Her Majesty's Government is inclined to share the views of the Imperial Cabinet contained in the note of the 3rd (15th) of last May, with reference to the composition of the Commission to delimitate the frontier of Afghanistan.

I must congratulate myself on this result, which gives me hope that by means of the understanding just established between them, the two Powers will not delay in arriving at a satisfactory solution of this important question, which will assist in consolidating the ties of friendship which unite them, and in ensuring the success of the humane and civilizing mission which each is called upon to pursue in its respective sphere of action.

As is shown by your above-mentioned note, M. l'Ambassadeur, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the respective Commissioners should be at Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Heri-Rud, about the 1st of next October.

The Imperial Cabinet sees no objection to agreeing in this opinion, but on the other hand, they think it would be advisable that, previous to the sending of the Commissioners to the spot, the two Governments should exchange views on the general bases of the future delimitation, so as to prevent as far as possible the differences of opinion and misunderstandings which might arise between the Commissioners and delay the progress of their labours.

As I had the honour of stating in my note of the 17th of last March, the future delimitation is, in the opinion of the Imperial Cabinet, destined to complete the arrangement formerly come to between the two Governments, the bases of which were recorded in the despatch addressed by Earl Granville to Lord A. Loftus on the 17th October, 1872, as also in the despatch from Prince Gortchacow to Count Brunnow of the 12th January, 1873. On your part, in your note of the 24th April you were good enough to assure me that Her Majesty's Government are also resolved to respect all previous arrangements.

The above-named despatch from Lord Granville, containing a definition of the north and north-west frontier of Afghanistan, establishes, amongst other things, that the port of Khoja-Saleh forms the extreme point of the Ameer of Afghanistan's possessions on the Amou-Daria, and that below that place the Ameer had no claim. This being so, the Imperial Cabinet is of opinion that Khoja-Saleh should be chosen as the starting-point of the Afghan frontier, and that with reference to the further tracing of the frontier, the Commissioners should be bound by the other information contained in Lord Granville's despatch, as also by the information which will be collected by them on the spot. The Commissioners will be, amongst other things, called upon to announce to their respective Governments without delay any point on which a difference of opinion might arise between them. In placing these observations before your Excellency, I beg that you will bring them to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government.

I should be very grateful, M. l'Ambassadeur, if you would have the kindness to inform me as soon as possible of the opinion of the Cabinet of London with reference to the points stated above, as well as to others on which a previous engagement would

be of great practical utility, and would contribute greatly to prevent the delays which the Boundary Commission might otherwise have to undergo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 56.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 2, 1884.

IN a conversation which I had this afternoon with M. de Giers, and which he began, his Excellency referred to the note he had written to me with regard to the Commission to be appointed for the Afghan boundary.

His Excellency said that he did not see the object of the Commissioners meeting at Sarakhs, which could not be a point of departure. His idea was that, as Khodja Saleh was a point which had been agreed upon between the two Governments in 1872-73, it would be much more desirable that the Commissioners should begin their operations at that point and work westward. He thought that in general terms the Commissioners should be instructed to be guided by the contents of the correspondence which passed between the two Governments at that time upon the subject as far as it went; and that when they arrived at points so far to the west of Khodja Saleh that the correspondence no longer referred to them, they should then endeavour to ascertain, as correctly as might be possible, which of the Turkoman tribes inhabiting that region were really under the rule of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and which were not so, and should then report the result of their investigations to their respective Governments.

I observed to his Excellency that I had supposed that the line of boundary would begin from the River Tejend, and probably from that point at which the continuation of the boundary between the Russian territory and Persia from Baba Durmaz would strike the Tejend, and that on that account it would it would be more convenient to begin operations from that point than from Khodja Saleh; but his Excellency said that the negotiations with Persia were not as yet sufficiently advanced to enable him to state where that point would be.

With regard to the Commissioner who should be appointed on the part of Russia, M. de Giers stated that he had as yet had no conversation either with the Emperor or with the Minister of War, but his own wish was that it should be some one who had had experience in such business, such a person, for instance, as General Zelenoi, who had already been employed on similar Commissions under the Treaty of Berlin, had always been on good terms with his English colleagues, and was moderate and conciliatory. His Excellency added, however, that he did not know where he was just now, how he was employed, nor whether he would again accept such an appointment. His rank, he said, was now that of a Brigadier-General.

His Excellency urged that it was advisable that the two Governments should be agreed as to the nature of the instructions which should be given to the Commissioners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 57.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 10.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 7, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 24th ultimo, in which was inclosed copy of a note which I was about to address to M. de Giers, relating to the claim put forward by the Ameer of Afghanistan to Shugnan and Roshan, I have now the honour to transmit herewith copy of his Excellency's reply to my note, in which he insists upon the terms of the Arrangement of 1872-73 as deciding that the course of the Oxus from Lake Sarikoul to its junction with the Kotcha was to be considered as the northern frontier of Afghanistan.

With regard to the proposal to send a Commission to those regions, his Excellency states that he will consult with the Governor-General of Turkestan upon the

subject, but that if the proposal were agreed to, it could only be on the condition that the Arrangements of 1872-73 would be the basis of their action.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 57.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

Ministère de Affaires Étrangères, Département Asiatique,
M. l'Ambassadeur, *le 23 Juin*, 1884.

EN réponse au Mémoire qui lui a été remis par M. de Vlangaly en Décembre 1883, votre Excellence a bien voulu m'informer, par sa note en date du 13 (25) courant, que l'Émir de l'Afghanistan considère Shougnan et Roschan comme faisant partie de la Province de Badakschan, laquelle, en vertu de l'Arrangement de 1872-73, a été reconnue comme possession Afghane. Le Gouvernement des Indes, ainsi qu'il résulte de la même note, ne possède pas des informations suffisantes pour pouvoir se prononcer définitivement sur cette question, et, dans cet état de cause, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine serait d'avis qu'il y aurait lieu d'envoyer à Shougnan et à Roschan un Commissaire Anglais, lequel, conjointement avec des Commissaires nommés par la Russie et l'Afghanistan, serait chargé de recueillir des informations sur les lieux.

Je ne puis m'empêcher de vous faire observer, M. l'Ambassadeur, que l'hésitation du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine à se prononcer sur la question qui fait l'objet du Mémorandum précité du Ministère Impérial, me fait supposer que les arguments contenus dans cette dernière pièce n'ont pas été appréciés à leur juste valeur, attendu que, dans le cas contraire, le Gouvernement de la Reine n'aurait pas tardé à se persuader que les prétentions de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan ne sauraient être conciliées avec l'arrangement intervenu entre la Russie et la Grande-Bretagne en 1872-73.

Aux termes de la dépêche qui a été adressée par Lord Granville à Lord Loftus, en date du 17 Octobre, 1872, la frontière nord du Badakschan et du Wakhan, qui est également celle de l'Afghanistan, est formée par le cours de l'Oxus (Pendjah), depuis le Lac de Sarikoul à l'est, jusqu'au point de sa jonction avec la Rivière de Kotcha. Les provinces de Shougnan et de Roschan, dont il n'est point fait mention dans la susdite dépêche, se trouvent en dehors de cette ligne de frontière, et cette circonstance suffit amplement pour démontrer que les prétentions de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan à la possession des deux localités ci-dessus mentionnées, et leur envahissement par le Gouverneur de Badakschan, se trouvent en contradiction avec l'Arrangement de 1872-73.

Je ne crois, d'ailleurs, pas superflu de vous rappeler, M. l'Ambassadeur, que lors des négociations qui ont précédé cet arrangement, des doutes avaient été élevés par le Gouvernement Impérial sur la validité des droits de l'Émir Schir Ali Khan sur le Badakshan et le Wakhan mêmes; que les informations recueillies à ce sujet par le Gouverneur-Général du Turkestan étaient loin de s'accorder avec les résultats des investigations effectuées d'ordre du Gouvernement Britannique et que de nombreux indices étaient de nature à faire considérer ces deux contrées comme entièrement indépendantes de l'Afghanistan. Ce n'est que poussé par un sentiment de déférence pour la Grande-Bretagne que le Cabinet Impérial avait consenti à se désister de ses objections.

L'instance du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine à obtenir la reconnaissance par la Russie des droits de Schir Ali Khan sur ce district de Wakhan aurait été sans objet, si Shougnan et Roschan, qui séparent ce district de Darvaz et de Ferghana, constituaient des possessions Afghanes, attendu que, dans ce dernier cas, le Wakhan ne pourrait être considéré que comme une province intérieure de l'Afghanistan.

En portant ces considérations à votre connaissance je viens vous prier, M. l'Ambassadeur, de vouloir bien les signaler à l'attention du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, qui, comme je me plais à l'espérer, n'hésitera plus à reconnaître le mal fondé des réclamations de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan et à le rappeler au respect de l'arrangement intervenu entre les deux Puissances.

Pour ce qui est de la Commission que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine propose d'envoyer sur les lieux, je ne manquerai pas de consulter le Gouverneur-Général du Turkestan sur les conditions dans lesquelles il croirait pouvoir contribuer

à la réalisation de cette proposition. Mais je me fais en attendant un devoir de vous faire observer que, vu les considérations ci-dessus exposées la Commission projetée ne saurait être chargée de l'examen des prétentions de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan et que sa tâche devrait se borner au tracé sur les lieux de la ligne de démarcation convenue en 1872-73 ainsi qu'à l'étude des modifications partielles qui pourraient y être apportées dans l'intérêt commun des Puissances Contractantes sans porter atteinte aux principes qui ont servi de base à la délimitation.

Je ne crois non plus superflu d'y ajouter que l'envoi des Commissaires sur les lieux devrait être précédé du rétablissement du *statu quo ante* dans ces contrées en vertu de quoi l'Émir est tenu de rappeler de Shougnan et de Roschan les fonctionnaires et les soldats Afghans qui se trouvent dans ces localités.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asiatic Department,
June 23, 1884.

M. l'Ambassadeur,

IN answer to the Memorandum which M. de Vlangaly gave your Excellency in December 1883, you have been good enough to inform me in your note of the 13th (25th) instant that the Ameer of Afghanistan considers Shougnan and Roschan as forming part of the Province of Badakshan, which, in virtue of the Arrangement of 1872-73, has been recognized as an Afghan possession. The Indian Government, according to this note, is not in possession of sufficient information to pronounce definitely on this question, and in this condition of affairs Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that it would be as well to send to Shougnan and to Roschan an English Commissioner, who, in conjunction with the Commissioners nominated by Russia and Afghanistan, would be intrusted with the duty of collecting information on the spot.

I must remark, M. l'Ambassadeur, that the hesitation of Her Majesty's Government to pronounce on the question which forms the subject of the above-named Memorandum of the Imperial Ministry leads me to suppose that the arguments contained in that document have not been appreciated at their proper value, seeing that Her Majesty's Government would otherwise immediately have recognized that the pretensions of the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan were irreconcilable with the Arrangement agreed upon between Russia and Great Britain in 1872-73.

According to the despatch from Lord Granville to Lord A. Loftus, dated the 17th October, 1872, the northern frontier of Badakshan and Wakhan, which is also that of Afghanistan, is formed by the course of the Oxus (Pendjeh) from the Lake of Sarikoul on the east to the point of its junction with the River of Kotcha. The Provinces of Shougnan and of Roschan, which are not mentioned in the above-named despatch, are outside this line of frontiers, and this circumstance affords quite sufficient evidence that the pretensions of the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan to the possession of the above-mentioned districts, and their invasion by the Governor of Badakshan, are in contradiction with the Arrangement of 1872-73.

I do not think it superfluous, moreover, to remind you, M. l'Ambassadeur, that at the time of the negotiations which preceded this Arrangement, doubts had been raised by the Imperial Government as to the validity of the rights of the Ameer Shere Ali Khan over even Badakshan and Wakhan; that the information collected on this subject by the Governor-General of Turkestan was not at all in harmony with the results of the investigations set on foot by the order of the British Government; and that many indications pointed to those two districts as entirely independent of Afghanistan. The Imperial Cabinet only consented to desist from its objections from their desire to show deference to the wishes of Great Britain.

The endeavour of Her Majesty's Government to obtain the recognition by Russia of the rights of Shere Ali Khan over this district of Wakhan would have had no motive, if Shougnan and Roschan, which separate this district from Darvaz and Ferghana, were Afghan possessions, for in that case Wakhan could only be considered as an internal province of Afghanistan.

In laying these considerations before you I must beg you, M. l'Ambassadeur, to be good enough to bring them to the notice of Her Majesty's Government, who will not, as I trust, hesitate any longer to recognize that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan's claims are without foundation, and to bid him to respect the Arrangement come to between the two Powers.

With reference to the Commission which Her Majesty's Government proposes to

send to the spot, I shall not fail to consult the Governor-General of Turkestan as to the manner in which he thinks that it would be possible to contribute to the realization of this proposal. But, meanwhile, I consider it my duty to remark that, in view of the above considerations, the proposed Commission cannot be instructed to examine the pretensions of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and that their task must be confined to tracing on the spot the boundary line agreed upon in 1872-73, as well as to the study of the partial modifications which might be made in it in the common interest of the Contracting Powers, without trenching upon the principles on which the delimitation is based.

I do not think it superfluous to add that the dispatch of the Commissioners to the spot must be preceded by the re-establishment of the *status quo ante* in those districts, in virtue of which the Ameer must recall from Shougnan and Roschan the Afghan officials and soldiers who are now there.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 58.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 10, 1884.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 1st instant relative to the proposed delimitation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, and inclosing a copy of a note from M. de Giers, stating that the Russian Government see no objection to the meeting of the Commissioners at Sarakhs, but suggesting that the meeting should rather take place at Khodja Saleh, which should be taken as the point of departure of the Afghan frontier.

Her Majesty's Government would much prefer that the work of delimitation should commence from the western end of the boundary, and for the following reasons:—

1. The British Commissioners must pass through Sarakhs in order to arrive at Khodja Saleh, and it would be a useless waste of time for them to go over the ground a second time.

2. The western portion being that where the most important interests are at stake, and where there is most likelihood of complications arising which might hinder a satisfactory settlement, it should be dealt with first.

Her Majesty's Government consider that the Commission should in the first place fix the point where the Afghan frontier joins the Heri-Rud, and should then proceed to lay down the boundary from that point to Khodja Saleh.

Her Majesty's Government are further of opinion that any points on which the Commission are unable to agree should be referred for the decision of the two Governments.

I have to request that your Excellency will report to me by telegraph any communications which you may receive from the Russian Government on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 59.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 12, 1884.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and I took the opportunity of having some conversation with his Excellency on Central Asian affairs.

I said that I had no doubt that M. de Giers was as anxious as I was that matters should be kept on a footing satisfactory to both countries, but that I could not but notice that since Russia had assumed the Protectorate of Merv, the Russian press had adopted a very aggressive tone as regards further annexations, and the future relations of the Empire with Afghanistan. The activity of the Russian military authorities on the Persian frontier, and in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan, had also increased.

I begged his Excellency to state to M. de Giers that any attempt on the part of

the Russian authorities to establish a footing on the western bank of the Heri-Rud would produce a state of feeling in this country which would put an end to the hope of a friendly arrangement.

I observed that the two Governments were now agreed as to the method of procedure for the demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan, and that nothing remained to be settled but the question of the point from which the Commission for this purpose should start. I felt sure that upon this point M. de Giers would see the reasonableness of our view that the operations should commence at the north-western end of the frontier, for the double reason that it was the more important portion of the boundary, and that this was the more convenient mode of action, and would save unnecessary travelling and loss of time.

M. de Staal said that he would report my observations to M. de Giers. His Excellency observed that before he left St. Petersburgh he had heard complaints made of the action of the Ameer of Afghanistan in regard to Penjdeh.

I said that was a question which I should be prepared to discuss with him, but that as far as the information in our possession went, Penjdeh had long belonged to Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 60.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 16.)

My Lord, *Tehran, June* 12, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, a Report upon the subject of Russian movements at Merv.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 60.

(Translation.) *May* 21, 1884.

THE Governor-General of the Caucasus was accompanied on his visit to Merv by an escort of 1,200 Cossacks and Turkomans, with 4 light guns. The splendour of his Staff, and the equipment of his followers, excited so much attention as to lead the Governors of this district to declare that his state exceeded that of the Shah during his recent visit.

The Chiefs of the Sarik and Téké Turkomans came out to meet him as far as Kahkaheh, and each of them received a suitable present.

There is a talk of founding a new town in the Ateks, for which three sites are mentioned. The first site proposed is close to the ruins at Abiverd; the second is Kozkan; the third at Khivehabad; and the Governor-General has promised to visit all three on his return from Merv, and to select the one that appears most suitable for the foundation of a large town.

This day the Governor-General is reported to have left Merv and to be within a couple of days' march of Kahkaheh on his return to Askabad. He is reported to have made arrangements for founding a town at Merv, which is to be larger than Askabad: 1,000 labourers are employed at this work. The number of Russian troops in Merv is said not to exceed 1,000. The Sarik tribes that had hitherto held aloof, have now submitted, and Sari Khan has been appointed Governor of their country. Some thirty or forty Notables have received presents; a Russian official accompanies them on their return home.

No. 61.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 16.)

My Lord, *Tehran, June* 15, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, a communication I have received concerning the visit of the Governor-General of the Caucasus to Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 61.

Report dated June 1, 1884.

(Translation.)

I HEAR from Merv that the Governor-General of the Caucasus, on his arrival there, decided that the site chosen by General Komaroff for the foundation of a town was unfit for the purpose, and selected another 12 miles to the south of the former site. It was arranged that before operations commenced the ground should be carefully surveyed by engineer officers. The distance from this site to Old Merv is about 12 miles, the distance to Herat 57 farsakhs or about 228 miles. Old Merv lies at about 60 farsakhs or 240 miles from Herat, Meshed, and Bokhara alike.

The Governor-General remained five days in Merv; he gave the rank of Colonel to Baba Khan as well as a Russian Order, appointed Makhdum Kuli Khan Governor of Tejjen, Mehneh, Doshakh, and Chachah, and gave a magnificent present to his brother Yusuf. He then went to the fort of Abdul Rahim Khan, which is distant about 20 miles from Merv, and inhabited by Salor Turkomans, to examine the neighbourhood. At the moment of his departure for this place he gave notice to the Merv Elders that they should assemble the tribes, as he wished to address a communication to them when he returned. I have no intelligence as to the nature of this communication, but I learn from private sources that the Governor-General returned to Askabad on the 25th May.

Zeinal Abedeen Mirza had been sent to survey the ground for the construction of a macadamized road from Kuchan to Meshed. It has been arranged that he is to send a plan of the road, together with an estimate, to Tehran, in order that a decision upon the subject may be arrived at.

No. 62.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 16.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, June* 16, 1884.

THE question of the probable occupation by Russia of the lands adjacent to the old fort of Sarakhs, situated on the right bank of the Tejjen, continues to cause much anxiety to the Shah and his Ministers. No positive statement has yet been made by the Russian Minister here of its being the intention of his Government to take possession of that territory, but the Minister for Foreign Affairs has been asked in a semi-official communication lately addressed to him by M. Melnikoff for explanations regarding the cultivation by Persian subjects of these lands, which, it is alleged by the Russians, have always hitherto been occupied and cultivated by the Turkomans of Merv. The objection raised by the Russian Minister is met by the Persian Government with the assertion that all the Sarakhs lands, whether on the right or the left bank of the river, are unquestionably Persian territory, and that the Turkomans who settled there from time to time did so with the permission of the Persian authorities, to whom they paid tithes. The Persian Government also affirm that they have repeatedly expelled the Turkomans from the Sarakhs lands when they had reason to be dissatisfied with their presence there.

A reference to despatches from this Legation will show that the statements made by the Persian Government in this matter are borne out by the fact that when the Merv Chiefs were negotiating for the submission of their tribe to Persia, one of the conditions that they proposed was that they should be allowed to occupy the district of Sarakhs, old Sarakhs being specially mentioned, and that the Persian Government

would not agree to the proposal, the late Hissam-es-Sultaneh, who was consulted in this matter, having considered it inadvisable that they should be allowed to do so.

The Russian Minister has been informed that the Persian Government consider their right to the whole of the Sarakhs territory indisputable, and they will therefore continue to allow their subjects to occupy and cultivate the lands on the right bank of the Tejjen which form part of the Sarakhs district. Communications between the Persian Government and the Russian Legation on this subject have, however, now been suspended, probably pending a reference to St. Petersburgh.

No. 63.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July* 16, 1884, 7 P.M.

INFORM Russian Government officially that Major-General Sir Peter Lumsden, K.C.B., member of the Indian Council, Aide-de-camp to the Queen, and formerly Adjutant-General in India, will be appointed British Commissioner for the delimitation of the Afghan boundary.

Ask the Russian Government to let Her Majesty's Government know the name of their Commissioner as soon as convenient.

Arrangements are being made respecting dispatch of escort, &c.

You will at the same time press for a favourable answer as to beginning the demarcation of the frontier at the Heri-Rud.

No. 64.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 19, 3 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, July* 19, 1884, 12·40 P.M.

IN the official answer, which I have just received from the Russian Government, M. de Giers insists upon the expediency of making Khodja Saleh the starting-point for the demarcation of the frontier.

No. 65.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 15, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 16th ultimo,* I have the honour to inclose a translation of an article in the official Gazette of the 13th instant, which contradicts certain statements made in the article of the "Moscow Gazette" of the 3rd (15th) June, a translation of which was transmitted in the despatch above mentioned.

It states that the southern limit of the Yolatan oasis is about 100 versts distant from the nearest point of the Afghan frontier; that the distance between the southern extremity of the Yolatan oasis and Herat is about 270 versts (180 miles), and that between the cultivated district of Old Sarakhs and Herat is about 250 versts (166 miles).

It denies that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff promised the early prolongation of the Kizil-Arvat Railway to Askabad.

It also states that the construction of a telegraph from Askabad to Merv has not been begun; that the administration of the Transcaspian will not be transferred to Merv; and that the administration has never proposed the expenditure of 5,000,000 roubles for forts, &c.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

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* No. 49.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Extract from the Official Gazette of July 1 (13), 1884.

(Translation.)

THE official Gazette of the 1st (13th) July, 1884, contains the following refutation of various statements made by the Tiflis correspondent of the "Moscow Gazette" relating to the Transcaspian region, and published in that newspaper of the 3rd (15th) June, 1884:—

"The branch of the Saryk tribe settled on the Yolatan, which has lately accepted Russian nationality, does not dwell in proximity to the frontier of Afghanistan, inasmuch as the southern limit of the arable lands of the Yolatan oasis is about 100 versts distant from the nearest point on that frontier.

"Another branch of the Saryk tribe is settled near the Afghan frontier, in the oasis of Penjdeh.

"The area of the newly-annexed Turkoman territory, and the number of its inhabitants, have not yet been determined; consequently, the figures given by the Tiflis correspondent in this connection are purely speculative.

"The statement that the territory now occupied by Russia extends to the frontier of Afghanistan, 60 versts from Herat, is also incorrect. The distance between the southern extremity of the Yolatan oasis and Herat is estimated to be about 270 versts, and that between the cultivated district of Old Sarakhs and Herat approximately 250 versts. The population of the Transcaspian province, prior to the annexation to it, this year, of new territory, did not number 141,000, butonly about 90,000.

"The Merv oasis is in nowise watered by the Tejend or Heri-Rud.

"The Chief Administrator* never announced to the inhabitants of Askabad the speedy extension of the Transcaspian Railway from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad; but in view of the Petitions of the population on the subject, and of the actual necessity, for trading purposes, of laying down a railroad between the two points mentioned, Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff promised, on his part, to use his best endeavours to bring about the realization of that important measure. The prolongation of the railway to Herat was of course out of the question.

"The construction of a telegraph line from Askabad to Merv has not yet been begun, as a preliminary survey of the ground is necessary, and it has only just been decided to appoint a specialist for the purpose.

"The Administration of the Transcaspian Province will not, and indeed cannot, be transferred to Merv, the annexation of which has increased the importance of Askabad as the chief administrative and commercial centre of the region. The Local Administration has never in its proposals made any mention of the sum of 5,000,000 roubles, alleged by the correspondent to have been appropriated for the construction of forts, &c.

"No new detachments of troops have been added to the garrisons of the Transcaspian region, therefore no permanent head-quarters could be assigned to them.'

No. 66.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 21.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 17, 1884.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 10th instant relating to the Afghan frontier to the north-west, I addressed a note to M. de Giers, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, communicating to him the substance of that telegram.

I have not yet received an answer to that note, but when I saw him yesterday afternoon he said that he hoped soon to be able to send me one. His Excellency added that he had consulted with the Emperor and the Acting Minister of War, and that they had all three been of the opinion that it would not be practicable to begin to lay down the boundary from a point on the Heri-Rud. In his answer he would give the grounds upon which this opinion rested, and by which he hoped that Her Majesty's Government would be induced to yield to the desire of the Russian Government that Khodja-Saleh should be the starting point.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

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* Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, June* 29 (*July* 11), 1884.

I DID not fail to transmit to Earl Granville, by the first opportunity, the note which I had the honour to receive from your Excellency of the 18th (30th) June, relating to the delimitation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan.

After a careful consideration of the contents of that note, his Lordship has instructed me to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government would greatly prefer that the demarcation of the boundary should be begun at the western end for the following reasons:—

Firstly, the British Commisioners would necessarily pass through Sarakhs in order to get to Khodja-Saleh, and it would be a useless waste of time for them to go twice over the same ground.

Secondly, the western portion of the frontier is that where the most important interests are at stake, and where there is the most chance of complications arising which would hinder a satisfactory settlement, and it should therefore be dealt with first.

The Commission should begin, as Her Majesty's Government think, by fixing the point where the Afghan frontier joins the Heri-Rud, and should then proceed to lay down the boundary from that point to Khodja-Saleh.

Her Majesty's Government concur with the Imperial Government in the opinion expressed by your Excellency in the note above mentioned, that any points on which the Commission are unable to agree should be referred for the decision of the two Governments.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 67.

Mr. Godley to Mr. Currie.—(Received July 21.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of the Earl of Kimberley, forwards herewith copy of a despatch from the Government of India on the subject of communications which have been opened with the Ameer in regard to the proposed Commission for the demarcation of the northern frontier of Afghanistan.

India Office, July 21, 1884.

Inclosure 1 in No. 67.

The Governor-General of India in Council to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Secret.)

My Lord, *Simla, June* 20, 1884.

WE have the honour to inform your Lordship that, in accordance with the permission conveyed in your telegram of the 27th May, we have opened communications with the Ameer regarding the proposed Commission for the delimitation of the northern frontier of Afghanistan.

2. We inclose a copy of a letter from the Viceroy to the Ameer on this subject.

We have, &c.
(Signed) RIPON.
J. GIBBS.
D. M. STEWART.
T. F. WILSON.
C. P. ILBERT.
S. C. BAYLEY.
T. C. HOPE.
A. COLVIN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 67.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

(After compliments.) *Simla, June* 10, 1884.

YOUR Highness has frequently pointed out to me the disadvantages of an indefinite frontier, and asked me for a document showing the precise boundaries of Afghanistan; and in my letter of the 11th March I informed your Highness that I had referred the matter for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

I have now the pleasure to acquaint your Highness with the fact that communications have passed between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Russia on the subject of the undetermined boundary of Afghanistan towards the north and west; and it has been agreed that the question should be investigated on the spot by Representatives of the two Governments.

Under these circumstances, the British Government would desire to be assisted in coming to a conclusion regarding the most advantageous line of boundary by a well-qualified Afghan officer possessing the full confidence of your Highness. It is evident that, in your Highness' interests, the deputation of such an officer is very desirable; and I have now to ask your Highness to be good enough to inform me of the name of the person whom you would propose to send.

I cannot as yet say precisely at what time the English and Russian Representatives are likely to meet. It might perhaps be a good thing if before that time the officer selected by your Highness were to come to India in order to explain your views to me in detail. He could then return to the Afghan frontier, by way of Cabul, so as to receive your Highness' final directions.

No. 68.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received July* 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 19, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 17th instant, in which I inclosed copy of a note which I had addressed to M. de Giers relating to the Afghan frontier, and more particularly to the wish expressed by Her Majesty's Government that the Commission for laying down that boundary should begin their operations from a point on the Heri-Rud, I have now the honour to inclose copy of the answer which I received last night from his Excellency.

In this note M. de Giers insists upon the expediency of the Commission making Khodja Saleh their starting point. He considers that the loss of time would be insignificant and would be amply compensated by the fact of beginning at a known point agreed upon by both Governments. He likewise argues that, because the greater difficulties are to be met with in the western part, it will be still more desirable to begin with the eastern part.

His Excellency urges, too, that if the Commissioners should not be able to agree upon the point of departure on the Heri-Rud, and should refer the question to their respective Governments, great delay might arise, because the Commission would then be in doubt as to what course it should pursue.

On the other hand, M. de Giers sets forth that, if Khodja Saleh should be selected as the point of departure, your Lordship's despatch to Lord Augustus Loftus of the 17th October, 1872, contains the elements of delimitation of the eastern part of the frontier, by which the Commissioners would be guided.

I addressed a note to M. de Giers on the 17th instant informing him of the name and rank of the Commissioner appointed by Her Majesty's Government, but as his Excellency is at Gatchina I presume that he had not received my note when he wrote that of which a copy is inclosed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 68.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Département Asiatique, le 6 Juillet, 1884.

M. l'Ambassadeur,

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'adresser en date du 29 Juin (11 Juillet) en réponse à la mienne du 18 Juin, année courante, au sujet de la délimitation de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, ainsi que vous me le mandez, préférerait que les travaux de délimitation commençassent à l'extrémité occidentale de la frontière, et non à Khodja-Saleh. Cette préférence est motivée, d'une part, par le désir de prévenir une perte de temps, qui serait inévitable si les Commissaires Anglais, qui doivent arriver d'abord à Sarakhs, étaient obligés d'y retourner plus tard, et, de l'autre, par la considération que c'est à la partie occidentale de la frontière que se rattachent les plus graves intérêts, et que c'est là que des complications de nature à entraver une solution satisfaisante sont le plus à craindre.

Quelque disposé que soit le Cabinet Impérial à se conformer aux désirs du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, je me vois pourtant dans la nécessité de faire observer à votre Excellence que les considérations ci-dessus exposées ne lui semblent pas suffisantes pour le faire renoncer au point de vue exposé dans ma note du 18 Juin, année courante, et selon lequel le poste de Khodja-Saleh devrait être adopté comme point de départ des travaux de délimitation.

Pour ce qui est de la perte de temps qu'appréhende le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, elle ne saurait être qu'insignifiante, vu l'absence complète de sérieux obstacles qu'offre aujourd'hui le voyage dans ces contrées. Elle sera, en outre, largement compensée par les facilités que trouveront les Commissaires s'ils sont appelés à commencer la délimitation à un point désigné d'avance et sur lequel aucune divergence d'opinions ne saurait se produire.

Quant aux difficultés inhérentes au tracé de la partie occidentale de la frontière Afghane, cette circonstance me semblerait plutôt de nature à militer en faveur du point de vue du Cabinet Impérial, c'est-à-dire en faveur du choix du poste de Khodja-Saleh comme point de départ de la délimitation.

Voici les considérations sur lesquelles je crois de mon devoir d'appeler l'attention de votre Excellence.

C'est pour la première fois qu'une Commission Russo-Anglaise va être chargée du tracé d'une frontière en Asie Centrale. Rien que la nouveauté du fait et l'insuffisance d'informations positives sur les contrées que cette Commission aura à visiter sont de nature à faire prévoir qu'il ne sera pas facile d'écarter des divergences d'opinions entre les Commissaires respectifs, sur les conditions dans lesquelles ils auront à remplir leur mandat. Ces aspérités, comme il y a tout lieu de supposer, ne manqueront pas de s'aplanir plus tard, lorsque les Commissaires se seront familiarisés avec les questions qu'ils auront à traiter et surtout lorsqu'ils auront appris à mieux se connaître. Mais jusque-là il semblerait peu pratique de les placer en face de la partie la plus difficile de leur tâche. Ce serait s'exposer à voir surgir entre eux dès le début des malentendus dont leurs rapports mutuels pourraient peut-être se ressentir et qui ne sauraient en tout cas exercer qu'une influence défavorable sur la marche de leurs travaux.

Il est au contraire à présumer qu'une entente sur quelques-unes des questions à régler, ne fût-ce que de moindre importance, ne manquerait pas de servir d'encouragement aux Commissaires et contribuerait jusqu'à un certain point à faciliter la solution des difficultés qui pourraient se présenter plus tard.

En admettant, ainsi que le pense le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, que les plus grandes difficultés se rattacheraient au tracé de la partie occidentale de la frontière Afghane, c'est à l'occasion de la désignation du point où devrait commencer cette frontière que des divergences d'opinions sont surtout à prévoir. Dans cet état de cause, l'on ne saurait s'empêcher de poser dès à présent la question de savoir, qu'auront à faire les Commissaires dans le cas où ils ne parviendraient pas à s'entendre sur le point en question. Devront-ils suspendre les travaux jusqu'à ce que le litige ait été examiné et résolu par les deux Gouvernements, ou bien seront-ils tenus de passer outre et de procéder au choix d'un autre point où la délimitation pourrait être reprise avec plus de succès? Dans le premier de ces deux cas, les travaux de délimitation subiraient infailliblement un temps d'arrêt dont il est impossible de calculer d'avance la durée, et, quant au second, il y a tout lieu de supposer que les mêmes difficultés ne tarderaient pas à se représenter lorsqu'il faudrait s'entendre sur le choix d'un nouveau

point. L'œuvre de la délimitation sera également entravée, et les résultats d'un tel état de choses seraient d'autant moins conformes aux intentions des deux Puissances, que les populations de l'Asie Centrale, qui sont loin d'être initiées à la nature des rapports qui unissent la Russie et la Grande-Bretagne, ne tarderaient à y voir l'indice de graves malentendus. Il ne saurait être de l'intérêt d'aucune des deux Puissances de voir se propager de telles erreurs.

D'autre part, il est permis de croire qu'en adoptant Khodja-Saleh comme point de départ de la future frontière Afghane, les deux Gouvernements parviendraient d'autant plus facilement à se soustraire à la plupart des inconvénients ci-dessus exposés, que la dépêche, adressée par Lord Granville à Lord Loftus en date du 17 Octobre, 1872, renferme, de l'avis du Cabinet Impérial, des éléments de délimitation de la partie orientale de la frontière, auxquels les Commissaires auront à se conformer.

Toutes ces considérations suffiront pour démontrer à votre Excellence qu'en se prononçant pour Khodja-Saleh le Cabinet Impérial n'a eu en vue que de faciliter la tâche qui incombe aux Commissaires et de contribuer au succès de l'œuvre de la délimitation. Je me plais à espérer, M. l'Ambassadeur, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine ne refusera pas de reconnaître l'importance de ces mêmes considérations, et qu'il n'hésitera pas non plus à donner son adhésion à la proposition du Cabinet Impérial, dans quel cas les deux Gouvernements pourraient procéder sans retard à la nomination de leurs Commissaires respectifs, ainsi qu'à l'élaboration des instructions auxquelles ceux-ci auront à se conformer dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, Asiatic Department, July* 6, 1884.

I HAVE received the note which your Excellency did me the honour of addressing to me on the 29th June (July 11th) in reply to mine of the 18th June of this year, on the subject of the delimitation of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan.

Her Majesty's Government would wish, as you state, that the work of delimitation should begin at the eastern extremity of the frontier, and not at Khoja-Saleh. This preference is founded on the one hand by the desire to prevent the loss of time which would inevitably occur if the English Commissioners, who will arrive first at Sarakhs, were obliged to return there later; and on the other, by the consideration that the most serious interests are concerned on the western portion of the frontier, and that it is there that complications likely to interfere with a satisfactory solution are most to be feared.

However much the Imperial Cabinet may be disposed to fall in with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, I am nevertheless obliged to observe to your Excellency that the above-mentioned considerations do not seem sufficient to make them give up the opinion stated in my note of the 18th June of this year, according to which Khoja-Saleh should be adopted as the starting-point of the work of delimitation.

With reference to the loss of time which Her Majesty's Government fears, it can only be insignificant, in view of the complete absence of serious obstacles which a journey in those countries now affords. This will be, moreover, fully compensated for by the facilities which the Commissioners will find if they have to begin the delimitation at a point settled on beforehand, and on which no divergence of opinion could arise.

With reference to the difficulties of the tracing of the eastern part of the Afghan frontier, this circumstance would seem to me rather to militate in favour of the view held by the Imperial Cabinet, that is to say, in favour of the choice of Khoja-Saleh as the starting-point of the boundary.

There are two considerations to which I consider it my duty to call the attention of your Excellency.

It is the first time that a Russo-English Commission will have been intrusted with the marking of a frontier in Central Asia. Nothing save the novelty of the fact, and the lack of positive information about the countries which this Commission will have to visit, would indicate that it will not be easy to avoid differences of opinion between the respective Commissioners about the manner in which they will have to carry out their instructions. These difficulties, as there is every reason to suppose, will undoubtedly be surmounted later, when the Commissioners have become familiar

with the questions with which they will have to deal, and particularly when they have become better acquainted. But till that moment it would seem rather unpractical to set them to work on the most difficult part of their task. The result might be that we should see from the very beginning misunderstandings arise which would be felt in their mutual relations, and which could not help in any case exercising an unfavourable influence on the progress of their labours.

It may, on the other hand, be presumed that an understanding on some of the questions at issue, even if it be of small importance, would undoubtedly encourage the Commissioners, and contribute up to a certain point to facilitate the solution of the difficulties which might arise later.

Whilst admitting, in accordance with the views of Her Majesty's Government, that the greatest difficulties will arise in the tracing of the western part of the Afghan frontier, these differences are most to be foreseen as to the fixing of the exact point where the frontier should begin. We cannot, therefore, refrain from asking the question—What will the Commissioners do if they do not succeed in coming to an understanding on this point? Must they suspend their work until this dispute shall have been examined and decided by the two Governments; or shall they be empowered to proceed and to choose another point where the delimitation could be taken up with more success? In the first of these two cases, the labours of delimitation would infallibly have to be delayed a length of time, the duration of which it is impossible to calculate beforehand; and, in the second, there is every reason to suppose that the same difficulties would inevitably arise when an understanding on some new point became necessary. The work of the delimitation will be interfered with in the same way, and the results of such a state of things would be so much the less in accordance with the intentions of the two Powers, that the populations of Central Asia, who are far from being acquainted with the nature of the relations which unite Russia and Great Britain, would immediately see therein the indication of various misunderstandings. It cannot be in the interest of either of the two Powers to see such errors propagated.

On the other hand, it may fairly be thought that, in adopting Khoja-Saleh as a starting-point of the future Afghan frontier, the two Governments would be able so much the more easily to avoid the greater part of the inconveniences stated above, as the despatch addressed by Lord Granville to Lord A. Loftus, on the 17th October, 1872, contains, in the opinion of the Imperial Government, the elements of a settlement on the eastern part of the frontier, to which the Commissioners will have to conform.

These considerations will suffice to show to your Excellency that, in pronouncing for Khoja-Saleh, the Imperial Cabinet has wished to facilitate the task which falls upon the Commissioners, and to contribute to the success of the work of the Commission. I trust, M. l'Ambassadeur, that Her Majesty's Government will not refuse to recognize the importance of these considerations, and will, further, not hesitate to adhere to the proposal of the Imperial Cabinet, in which case the two Governments could, without delay, nominate their respective Commissioners, as well as draw up the instructions which will guide them in the accomplishment of their task.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 69.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 23, 1884.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 17th instant, inclosing a copy of the note which you addressed to M. de Giers relative to the proposed delimitation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan; and I have to state that the terms of that note are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 70.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July 25, 1884.*

I HAVE received your despatch of the 19th instant, forwarding a note from M. de Giers, in which his Excellency urges the expediency of the Commission for the demarcation of the Afghan frontier making Khodja Saleh their starting-point, and gives reasons for this opinion.

Her Majesty's Government, while recognizing the friendly tone of M. de Giers' explanations, cannot agree with his Excellency that it would be advisable to begin the demarcation at Khodja Saleh.

Owing to the distance which the Commission would have to travel before arriving there, and to the severity of the winter in those parts, the arrangement would be tantamount to postponing the commencement of operations until next year. Moreover, there is no pressing need of tracing the boundary at Khodja Saleh, which is already fixed by the Agreement between the two Governments. On the other hand, the annexation of Merv has caused much anxiety in Afghanistan in regard to the portion of the frontier between the Murghab and the Heri-Rud, and the only way to allay that anxiety is by a definitive settlement of the points where the boundary touches those two rivers.

No advantage can be gained by postponing this settlement; on the contrary, the difficulties of it will be aggravated by delay.

Her Majesty's Government have every confidence that if entered upon now, the negotiations may be brought to a satisfactory result, but they feel that there would be great danger in delaying them.

Her Majesty's Government desire that your Excellency should call upon M. de Giers at once, and should you think it advisable, that you should request an audience of His Majesty the Emperor, in order to urge the above considerations in the strongest manner.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 71.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, July 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July 28, 1884.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 25th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I yesterday sent you by private hand a despatch upon the question of the Afghan frontier.

M. de Giers will go to Peterhof to-morrow, and will speak to the Emperor upon this subject.

In the meantime, his Excellency requested me to ask you confidentially whether, in the event of the Imperial Government being able to agree that the delimitation of the frontier should be commenced from the Heri-Rud, Her Majesty's Government have formed any idea as to the precise point on that river at which the boundary should begin; for he is of opinion that it would be much better if the two Governments could come to an agreement beforehand as to that point.

In my despatch I also conveyed his Excellency's wish that you would inform him on what principles the instructions to the Commission should be framed, whether they should be based upon ethnographical, geographical, or topographical considerations, or on all three.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 72.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July 27, 1884.*

IN consequence of your Lordship's telegram of the 25th instant, I went yesterday to Gatchina to see M. de Giers, and submitted to his Excellency, in the strongest

terms I could use, the reasons which rendered it impossible for Her Majesty's Government to agree to the proposal of the Russian Government that the Commission for the delimitation of the north-western boundary of Afghanistan should begin its operations at Khodja-Saleh.

His Excellency replied by the arguments he has already set forth with regard to the objections which the Russian Government find to the attempt to decide upon a starting point on the Heri-Rud, for the fixing of which the Commission would have no ground to go. He said that it would be almost certain that, even if either of the Commissioners should venture to suggest some particular point, the other would disagree with him, and such disagreement at the very outset of its labours would have an exceedingly bad effect in those regions, where it would probably be looked upon as almost a conflict between the two countries. He added that a further complication would arise from the fact that Persia claims a certain amount of territory on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, and that this claim would again render it more difficult for the Commission to fix the western point at which the frontier should commence. His Excellency added that it would be greatly to the advantage of the good understanding which should be established in the Commission that they should begin at a point where no great difficulties would arise, and where there would be little likelihood of any disagreement, thus giving time to the Commissioners to get accustomed to each other.

I pointed out to M. de Giers that whenever the Commissioners should reach the portion between the Murghab and the Heri-Rud, the same difficulties would exist, aggravated probably by the agitation which would go on increasing in Afghanistan, and perhaps by conflicts which might arise in the debatable territory.

M. de Giers asked what I thought would be the principles which would form the basis of the instructions to be given to the Commissioners. I answered that I presumed that the great principle would be to ascertain how far the Ameer of Afghanistan had dominion over and controlled the inhabitants of the regions in those parts, and that where that dominion and control ended, there the boundary should be laid down; but his Excellency objected that this would convert the Commission merely into one of inquiry; to which I replied that inquiries upon this question would certainly have to precede the delimitation of the frontier.

M. de Giers, whilst he showed himself very much opposed to recede from the position which he had taken up in his note of the 6th (18th) instant, begged and even insisted that I should address him a note embodying the observations which I had made by your Lordship's direction, and I am, therefore, to-day transmitting to him the note of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, which he promised that he would take into further consideration and submit to the Emperor.

His Excellency, however, expressed some disappointment that your Lordship had not laid down some principles on which the instructions to be given to the Commissioners should be framed, and whether these principles should be ethnographical, topographical, or geographical, or all three. From observations which he has let fall, on this occasion and at other times, his opinion seems to be that all the Turkoman tribes should be excluded from Afghanistan, in the hope, of course, that they would ultimately, and even very soon, give their allegiance to Russia. On this ground efforts will, no doubt, be made to place Penjdeh outside of Afghanistan, and in accordance with views expressed by Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff since his recent visit to Merv, to make the range of mountains, said to be about 30 miles to the south of Penjdeh, the northern boundary in that part of the Ameer's dominions.

M. de Giers informed me that he is expecting the arrival here in a few days of the Russian Engineer, M. Lessar, and that he hopes to be able to obtain a good deal of information from him.

His Excellency also told me, confidentially, that he had suggested General Zelenoi to the Emperor, as the Russian Commissioner, and that His Majesty, as well as the Minister of War, had acquiesced in the suggestion, but that it was not yet known whether the General would accept the appointment.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, July* 15 (27), 1884.

I DID not fail to transmit to Earl Granville a copy of your Excellency's note of the 6th (18th) of this month on the subject of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan, and I have now received his Lordship's instructions to assure you that Her Majesty's Government recognize the friendly tone of the explanations given in that note, but that they are unable to agree that it would be advisable to begin the demarcation of the frontier at Khodja-Saleh.

They consider that, owing to the distance which the Commission would have to travel before arriving at Khodja-Saleh, and the severity of the winter, the arrangement proposed by the Imperial Government would be tantamount to postponing the commencement of the operations until next year. Moreover, there is no pressing need of tracing the boundary at Khodja-Saleh, as it is already fixed by the Agreement of 1872-73 between the two Governments.

In the meantime the recent annexation of Merv has caused much anxiety and agitation in Afghanistan with regard to that portion of the frontier which lies between the Rivers Murghab and Heri-Rud, and the only way to allay that anxiety is by a definite settlement of the points where the boundary touches those rivers. A postponement of this settlement will be of no advantage, but will, on the contrary, aggravate the difficulties which already exist.

Her Majesty's Government are confident that if negotiations be at once entered upon, they may now be brought to a satisfactory result, but they feel that there would be great danger in delay. Earl Granville has therefore directed me to convey to your Excellency their earnest hope that the Imperial Government will give due weight to the above important considerations with a view to instructions being furnished to the Commissioners to begin their operations from the Heri-Rud.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 73.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, July 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 30, 1884.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 25th instant, M. de Giers has this afternoon told me that His Imperial Majesty is inclined to assent to your proposal that the delimitation of the Afghan frontier should be begun on the Heri-Rud, on condition that an agreement can be come to between the two Governments as to the point of departure from that river, and as to the principles which are to form the basis of the instructions to be given to the Commissioners. But His Majesty is awaiting a Report upon the subject which he has ordered the War Department to furnish him.

M. Lessar arrived here yesterday, and M. de Giers promises me a written answer to my last note in a few days.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 74.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July* 30, 1884.

I CALLED upon M. de Giers this afternoon at his office, and inquired of him what had been the result of his interview with the Emperor yesterday with regard to the question of the Afghan frontier.

M. de Giers replied that he had submitted the whole case to His Majesty, and had had a long conversation with him upon the subject. He had informed him of the reasons on which Her Majesty's Government founded their wish that the delimitation of the boundary should be commenced from a point on the Heri-Rud, and that he had

addressed a letter to the Acting Minister of War, stating the whole case and requesting that he would make a Report upon it without delay. He had added that, in the event of its being necessary, I should request His Majesty to grant me an audience.

The result of their consideration of the matter was, as M. de Giers informed me, that His Majesty felt himself obliged to await the Report from the War Department before coming to a definite decision, but that His Majesty was most anxious to meet the wishes of Her Majesty's Government as far as lay in his power, and that the work of the Commission should be carried out. He was therefore inclined to assent to the proposal that the Commission should begin its labours from a point on the Heri-Rud, on the condition that the two Governments could previously come to an agreement as to the point in question from which the line of boundary should start, and as to the principles upon which the instructions for the guidance of the Commissioners should be framed.

Without coming to an agreement upon the first question, both the Emperor and M. de Giers thought that there would be nothing definite for the Commissioners to go upon, and that the result might be an immediate conflict between them, which would make an extremely bad impression upon the semi-civilized populations of those regions.

The groundwork of the instructions to be given it was also most desirable to agree upon as soon as possible, and His Majesty therefore hoped that Her Majesty's Government would set forth their views upon these two subjects without delay.

M. de Giers informed me that M. Lessar arrived here last night, but that he had not yet seen him. He hoped, however, to be much enlightened upon the topography of those regions by that gentleman, who was, perhaps, better acquainted with them than almost any one.

M. de Giers added that the Emperor shared his apprehensions that the Persian Government might put forward claims to territory on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, and that difficulties might arise from their pretensions. He said that a Special Embassy, charged with presents from the Shah of Persia to the Cesarewitch, was now on its way from Tehran to St. Petersburgh, and he had no doubt that it was also the bearer of instructions to submit those claims to the consideration of the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 75.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 5, 1884.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 28th ultimo respecting the Afghan boundary, I have to request you to inform the Russian Government that Her Majesty's Government have up to the present time considered that the territory of the Ameer of Afghanistan extended to a point on the Heri-Rud, in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs. They think, however, that it would be undesirable to make any attempt to arrive at a precise understanding beforehand upon a matter which it is one of the objects of the Commission to investigate.

In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the primary duty of the Commission will be to ascertain the true limits of the Ameer's territory, and, therefore, in defining his jurisdiction, they must be guided by the political relations of the tribes which inhabit the country; but, in order to avoid as far as possible he risk of future complications, the Commission, whilst respecting all the legitimate rights of the Ameer, should bear in mind the importance of not imposing upon him such obligations as he would be unwilling to assume, or would practically be unable to fulfil.

Her Majesty's Government propose to frame their instructions to the British Commissioner in accordance with the principles stated above.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 76.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 5, 1884.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 27th ultimo, inclosing a copy of the note which you addressed to M. de Giers stating the reasons for which Her Majesty's Government are unable to agree that it would be advisable that the Commission for the demarcation of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan should begin at Khodja Saleh.

The terms of your Excellency's note are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 77.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 6, 1884.

I HAVE been in communication with the Secretary of State for India on the subject of your despatch of the 7th ultimo, forwarding copy of a note from M. de Giers, in reply to the one addressed to him by your Excellency, relative to the claims of the Ameer of Afghanistan to Shignan and Roshan.

I have to request that your Excellency will inform M. de Giers that Her Majesty's Government entirely agree with the Russian Government that the proposed Commission in tracing the line of demarcation should adhere to the principles which formed the basis of the Agreement of 1872-73. It appears to them to be impossible, without an investigation on the spot, to determine how far the claims of the Ameer are in accordance with those principles, and they therefore consider that such an investigation by a Joint Commission would be the only satisfactory method of dealing with the various questions connected with the northern frontier of Afghanistan, questions which may be easily settled now, but which, if left undecided, may give rise, sooner or later, to misunderstandings between the two Governments.

With reference to the concluding paragraph of M. de Giers' note to the effect that the *status quo ante* must be restored in Shignan and Roshan previous to the dispatch of the proposed Commission, your Excellency should point out to the Russian Government that the question whether the *status quo ante* has been in any way departed from as regards Afghan jurisdiction over those territories is one upon which Her Majesty's Government cannot pronounce definitively without the local investigation which they desire.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 78.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, August 12.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 11, 1884.

ON the 6th instant I furnished M. de Giers with a Memorandum embodying the substance of your Lordship's telegram of the 5th instant respecting the Afghan boundary.

I have to-day received from his Excellency a note in which he states that the Imperial Government, although they admit the difficulties in the way of accurately determining beforehand the extent of Afghan territory, are, nevertheless, anxious that the whole of the Saryk tribe of Turkomans, extending southwards from Yolatan to the Afghan posts along the frontier, should be placed under the authority of Russia, and that the instructions to the Commissioners should include this stipulation. The grounds for this request are stated in M. de Giers' note.

No reply to my inquiries respecting the numbers and character of the escort of the Commissioners has yet reached me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 79.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received August* 13.)

My Lord, *Tehran, July* 8, 1884.

THE measures recently adopted by the Persian Government with respect to Ayoub Khan have unquestionably been of great service to the Ameer of Afghanistan. It was well known to Ayoub Khan's followers and others that when he insisted last winter on being allowed to quit the Persian territory he intended to proceed by way of Merv to Meimaneh. With his own followers, who were numerous in Khorassan, and the support which he could no doubt have obtained from the Merv Turkomans, he would have reached the Afghan frontier with a considerable force, and aided by the Walee of Meimaneh, who was then in revolt, and his adherents in other parts of Afghanistan, he could not have failed to raise a general commotion throughout the north-western provinces of Aghanistan, which might have led to his regaining his former position as Ruler of Herat. Ayoub Khan's plans were, however, entirely upset by the action of the Persian Government, who decided upon ordering his arrest and detention in Khorassan, measures which were followed by the suppression of all threatened opposition in the Herat districts, and by the surrender shortly afterwards of Meimaneh to the Ameer's troops.

The arrest of Ayoub Khan at Meshed, and his removal as a prisoner to Kuchan have been of advantage in this country also, for they have placed the relations of the Persian authorities with the Afghan refugees for the first time on a satisfactory footing. Ayoub Khan has now understood that the orders of the Persian Government with regard to himself cannot be disregarded, and his followers have learned that for the next two years at least none of their Chief's projects are likely to be realized in Afghanistan. A favourable opportunity thus presents itself for detaching these people from Ayoub, and the Ameer would, I think, act wisely if he now offered liberal terms to induce them to return to their allegiance and homes.

The Shuja-ed-Dowleh, Governor of Kuchan, deserves credit for the manner in which he has carried out the Shah's orders for bringing Ayoub Khan and his principal Chiefs to Tehran. All idea of resistance was disposed of by his taking a large body of irregular cavalry to Ayoub Khan's quarters and giving him the option to march at once quietly and voluntarily to Tehran, or to be compelled to do so under restraint.

Ayoub Khan was escorted to Tehran by the Governor of Kuchan himself, with a strong force of cavalry. His reception on arrival here was very different to that accorded to him on his former visit. Then he was received with every mark of consideration. High officials were sent out to meet and escort him into the city, and a large house, where he was for some time the guest of the Shah, that is, entertained at the Shah's expense, was prepared for his accommodation. On the present occasion he entered Tehran escorted by a body of Kuchan irregular cavalry, without any notice being taken of him by the Persian authorities. A house had been prepared for him, but without furniture or attendants. I understand that one of the Persian Ministers has since called upon him, but he has not yet been received by the Shah, nor has he had any intercourse with the Persian officials.

For the present it is intended that he shall reside in Tehran, and unless some unforeseen difficulty should arise with him or his people, which I do not anticipate, it is not likely that his place of residence will be changed. Should he himself, however, express a wish to leave Tehran, or should it afterwards be found more convenient that he should do so, Ispahan, Sultanabad, or Burujird will probably be selected for his future residence.

I have the honour to inclose herewith a list of the Chiefs who have accompa Ayoub Khan to Tehran, which has been furnished to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the information of the Government of India.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 79.

List of Afghan Chiefs who have accompanied Eyoub Khan to Tehran, as furnished by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, July 9, 1884.

(Translation.)

Sirdar Ahmed Ali Khan.*
Sirdar Abdur Rahman Khan.
Sirdar Moossa Khan.†
Sirdar Abdul Vahab Khan.
Sirdar Feth Mohammed Khan.
Luinab, ex-Governor of Turkestan.
Sirdar Mohammed Aslam Khan.
General Perviz Shah Khan.
General Taj Mohammed Khan.
The physician in attendance on Eyoub Khan, known as Hakeemetu.
Sepeh Salar, Hussein Ali Khan.

No. 80.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 11, 1884.*

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 5th instant I called upon M. de Giers and submitted to him a Memorandum, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, conveying the substance of that telegram. His Excellency made no remarks with regard to it except that he was glad to receive it, and that he thought that it encouraged the hope that some agreement might be arrived at between the two Governments as to the instructions which were to be given to the Commissioners. He added that he was preparing an answer to my note of the 27th ultimo.

I have this afternoon received from M. de Giers the note of which I also inclose a copy. In it his Excellency insists that the proposal to begin tracing the boundary at Khodja Saleh would have been more likely to bring about an agreement between the two Governments, and that the project of starting from the Heri Rud can lead to satisfactory results only provided a previous understanding be established as to the principles by which the Commissioners are to be guided.

His Excellency states that the Imperial Government are aware of the difficulty of agreeing upon the extent of Afghan territory, but he goes on to give his views as to the position of the Saryk Turkomans, whose settlements he asserts extend from Yolatan on the Murghab (south of, but close to, Merv) to the Afghan frontier-posts, and he expresses the desire of the Russian Government that the whole of this tribe should come under the influence of the Russian authorities, whose protection he alleges that they have solicited. His Excellency intimates that this is the most important of the principles upon which the instructions to the Commissioners should be founded.

If this proposal is to be taken into consideration at all, it would probably be advisable to ascertain to what point the Saryk Turkoman settlements are assumed to extend.

According to the maps, the Salor Turkomans are to the south of the Saryks, but it may be that the Russian Commissioner would contend that the former are but a section of the Saryk Turkomans. Colonel Stewart could probably give valuable information upon this subject. The first time I see M. de Giers I shall endeavour to discover the views of his Government as to the extent of the Saryk Turkoman settlements.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 80.

Memorandum given to M. de Giers, July 25 (August 6), 1884.

HER Majesty's Government have up to the present time considered the territory of Afghanistan to extend to a point in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs; but they are

* Grandson of Ameer Shere Ali Khan. † Son of Ameer Yakoob Khan.

of opinion that it is undesirable to make any attempt to arrive at a precise understanding beforehand on a matter which it is one of the objects of the Commission to investigate.

According to the views of Her Majesty's Government, the primary duty of the Commission will be to ascertain the true limits of Afghan territory, and they must therefore be guided, in defining the jurisdiction of the Ameer, by the political relations of the tribes which occupy the country; but, whilst recognizing all the legitimate rights of the Ameer, the Commission should bear in mind the importance, in order to reduce to a minimum the risk of future complications, of not imposing upon him obligations which he would be unwilling to assume or could not in practice fulfil.

It is upon these principles that Her Majesty's Government propose to frame the instructions with which the British Commissioner will be furnished.

St. Petersburgh, July 25 (*August* 6), 1884.

Inclosure 2 in No. 80.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 30 *Juillet* (11 *Août*), 1884.

PAR sa note en date du 15 (27) Juillet votre Excellence a bien voulu informer le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine ne saurait s'associer à l'avis du Cabinet Impérial quant à l'opportunité d'adopter Khodja-Saleh comme point de départ de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan, et que pour couper court à l'agitation qui s'est produite dans les États de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan à la suite de l'annexion de Merv, il lui semblerait urgent de procéder d'abord à la délimitation du territoire compris entre le Hériroud et le Mourgab. Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, ainsi qu'il résulte de la même note, est convaincu que les négociations au sujet du territoire en question pourraient aboutir aujourd'hui à un résultat satisfaisant et qu'il serait, au contraire, dangereux d'ajourner le tracé de cette partie de la frontière.

Étant fermement résolu à ne point s'écarter de la ligne de conduite qui lui est indiquée par ses arrangements antérieurs avec la Grande Bretagne, le Cabinet Impérial est loin de partager les craintes du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, et il persiste, d'un autre côté, à croire qu'une délimitation poursuivie dans les conditions précisées dans la note du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères du 6 (18) Juillet pourrait mener plus facilement à une entente entre les deux États sur une ligne de démarcation à tracer entre les sphères d'influence respectives. Poussé toutefois par le désir de donner une nouvelle preuve des dispositions conciliantes qui l'animent, le Cabinet Impérial s'est fait un devoir de soumettre à un examen minutieux la proposition que vous avez été chargé de lui faire, et il a dû reconnaître que l'adoption de cette proposition ne pourrait aboutir à des résultats satisfaisants qu'en cas où une entente préalable s'établirait entre les deux Puissances sur les principes auxquels les Commissaires respectifs auront à se conformer dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche.

Le Mémorandum en date du 25 Juillet (6 Août) que votre Excellence a bien voulu me remettre, prouve que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine reconnaît, de son côté, l'utilité d'une telle entente, et cette circonstance me fait supposer qu'un échange ultérieur de vues entre les deux Cabinets ne saurait tarder à amener entre eux un accord sur la nature des instructions dont il y aurait lieu de munir les Commissaires Démarcateurs.

Ainsi qu'il résulte du Mémorandum ci-dessus mentionné, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique trouve qu'il serait peu pratique de chercher à arriver d'avance à une définition précise des limites de la juridiction de l'Émir Afghan dans les contrées qu'il s'agit de délimiter, et que ce soin devrait être abandonné aux Commissaires Démarcateurs. Pour ce qui est de ces derniers, ils seraient tenus de se laisser guider dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche par les relations politiques des tribus habitant ces contrées. Ils ne devraient pas non plus perdre de vue la nécessité de réduire au minimum les risques de futures complications, et de ne point imposer à l'Émir des obligations qu'il ne voudrait point assumer, ou qu'il serait hors d'état de remplir.

Le Cabinet Impérial est loin de méconnaître les difficultés auxquelles ne tarderait pas à se heurter toute tentative prématurée ayant pour objet d'établir un accord sur une exacte définition de l'étendu du territoire Afghan. Toutefois, eu égard à l'état actuel des choses dans ces contrées, il est d'avis qu'il serait de la plus haute importance

de donner plus de développement aux principes généraux exposés dans le mémoire du 25 Juillet (6 Août).

Vous n'ignorez peut-être pas, M. l'Ambassadeur, qu'aussitôt après la soumission des Merviens le Gouvernement Impérial s'est vu obligé de recueillir des informations sur les contrées contigues aux États de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan. Je crois avoir à peine besoin de vous dire que cette disposition a été motivée tout autant par la nécessité d'aviser à la sécurité des confins de l'oasis de Merv que par le désir de prévenir tout ce qui serait de nature à donner lieu à des interprétations erronées sur les projets de la Russe.

Il appert des investigations effectuées par le soin des autorités de la Province Transcaspienne que le territoire au sud de Merv est occupé par la tribu des Turcomans Saryks dont les campements s'étendent depuis Yolatan, sur le Mourgab, jusqu'à proximité des postes-frontières Afghans. Cette tribu, qui s'est de tout temps distinguée par ses instincts pillards, se trouvait en état d'hostilité permanent avec les Merviens; mais, depuis la soumission de ces derniers, les Saryks sont venus solliciter à leur tour la protection des autorités Russes. Celle-ci leur a été promise à condition qu'ils renonçassent eux-mêmes à troubler le repos de leurs voisins.

Étant résolu à faire respecter les engagements contractés par les Turcomans, le Cabinet Impérial ne saurait perdre de vue que l'efficacité de ses efforts ne serait assurée que dans le cas où la tribu des Saryks toute entière serait placée sous l'influence des autorités Russes, et que l'action de ces autorités se heurterait à des difficultés insurmontables si la ligne de démarcation projetée venait à partager cette tribu et à en placer une partie sous la domination de l'Afghanistan. Eu égard à cette considération, le Cabinet Impérial croit devoir exprimer dès à présent le désir que l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan soit mis en demeure de renoncer à toute velléité d'agrandissement aux dépens des contreés habitées par les Saryks, qui n'ont jamais été sujets de l'Afghanistan. Un tel engagement serait entièrement conforme aux bases de l'arrangement de 1872-73.

D'autre part, ayant réussi à réprimer le brigandage, qui a été la principale ressource des Turcomans, la Russie est tenue d'encourager ces derniers à chercher leurs moyens d'existence dans le travail et surtout dans l'agriculture. Ce dernier ~~but~~ pourrait difficilement être atteint si, pour accroître le territoire de l'Afghanistan, l'on évinçait les Turcomans des terres susceptibles de culture, qui sont très restreintes dans ces contrées et dont la population Afghane ne saurait tirer parti. D'ailleurs le Cabinet Impérial a déjà eu précédemment l'occasion de faire observer que ce n'est point dans une extension de son territoire, mais bien plutôt dans une entente sincère entre les deux Grandes Puissances que l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan trouverait la garantie de sécurité qu'il semble rechercher pour ses États.

Telles sont, M. l'Ambassadeur, les considérations auxquelles le Cabinet Impérial croit devoir attacher la plus haute importance et qu'il voudrait voir insérer dans les instructions dont les deux Gouvernements auront à munir les Commissaires Démarcateurs.

Loin de porter atteinte aux intérêts de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan, ces considérations ne tendent qu'à écarter tout motif de malentendu et de complication, et à assurer la stabilité des arrangements à intervenir. A ce point de vue elles semblent entièrement conformes aux vues du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique telles qu'elles ressortent du Mémorandum du 25 Juillet (6 Août).

Je me plais en conséquence à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté voudra bien accueillir les observations ci-dessus exposées comme une nouvelle preuve de la valeur que le Cabinet Impérial attache à la consolidation des relations amicales entre les deux Puissances et qu'il ne refusera pas d'y donner suite.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, July* 30 (*August* 11), 1884.

IN your note of the 15th (27th) July your Excellency was good enough to inform the Imperial Foreign Office that Her Majesty's Government could not agree in the opinion of the Imperial Cabinet as to the advisability of adopting Khodja-Salch as the starting-point of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, and that to put an end to the agitation which arose in the States of the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan after the annexation of Merv, it seemed to them urgently necessary to undertake first of all the delimitation of the territory comprised between the Heri-Rud and the Mourgab. Her Majesty's Government, as is stated in this note, is convinced that

the negotiations on the subject of the territory in question could now lead to a satisfactory result, and that it would be dangerous, on the other hand, to adjourn the tracing of this part of the frontier.

Being firmly resolved not in any way to depart from the line of conduct which their previous arrangements with Great Britain have given evidence of, the Imperial Cabinet is far from sharing the fears of Her Majesty's Government, and persists, on the contrary, in thinking that a delimitation carried out in the manner shown in the Minister for Foreign Affairs' note of the 6th (18th) July might more easily lead to an understanding between the two States as to a line of demarcation to be traced between the respective spheres of action. Animated nevertheless by the desire to give a new proof of the conciliatory feelings which animate them, the Imperial Cabinet have made it their duty to submit to a minute examination the proposals which you have been instructed to make to them, and they have come to the conclusion that the adoption of this proposal could only lead to satisfactory results in the event of a previous understanding being come to between the Powers, to the principles of which the respective Commissioners will have to agree in the accomplishment of their task.

The Memorandum, dated the 25th July (6th August), which your Excellency has been good enough to give me proves that Her Majesty's Government recognizes on their side the advantage of such an understanding, and this circumstance makes me think that a further exchange of views between the two Cabinets could not help bringing about an agreement between them as to the nature of the instructions which should be given to the Boundary Commissioners.

As is stated in the above-mentioned Memorandum, Her Majesty's Government think that it would not be practical to try and arrive beforehand at a precise definition of the limits of the jurisdiction of the Afghan Ameer in the countries to be delimitated, and that this task should be left for the Boundary Commissioners, whose duty it will be to be guided in the accomplishment of this task by the political relations of the tribes inhabiting those districts. They ought, moreover, not to lose sight of the necessity of reducing to a minimum the risks of future complications, and not to impose upon the Ameer obligations which he has no desire to assume, or which he would not be in a condition to fulfil.

The Imperial Cabinet is far from ignoring the difficulties which any premature endeavour to come to an agreement about an exact definition of the extent of Afghan territory must immediately meet with; nevertheless, in view of the actual state of things in those districts, they are of opinion that it would be of the highest importance to extend more fully the general principles stated in the Memorandum of the 25th July (6th August).

You are aware perhaps, M. l'Ambassadeur, that directly after the submission of Merv, the Imperial Government was obliged to collect information about the districts adjoining the States of the Ameer of Afghanistan. I need hardly tell you that this resolution originated quite as much from the necessity of securing the confines of the Merv Oasis as from a desire to prevent everything that might give rise to erroneous interpretations about the projects of Russia.

It appears from the investigations made by the authorities of the Transcaspian Province that the territory to the south of Merv is occupied by the tribe of Saryk Turkomans, whose Settlements extend from Yulatan on the Mourgab up to the neighbourhood of the Afghan outposts. This tribe, which has always been notorious for its pillaging propensities, was in a permanent state of hostility with the inhabitants of Merv, but since the submission of the latter, the Saryks have in their turn come to beg for the protection of the Russian authorities. This has been promised them on condition that they on their part give up troubling the peace of their neighbours.

Being resolved to cause the engagements contracted by the Turkomans to be respected, the Imperial Cabinet cannot lose sight of the fact that the success of their efforts could only be assured if the whole tribe of Saryks were placed under the influence of the Russian authorities, and that the action of these authorities would encounter insurmountable difficulties if the projected line of demarcation were to divide this tribe and place a part of it under the dominion of Afghanistan. With respect to this consideration, the Imperial Cabinet must now express their wish that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan should be called upon to renounce all intention of aggrandizement at the expense of districts inhabited by the Saryks, who have never been subjects of Afghanistan. Such an engagement would be in entire conformity with the bases of the Arrangement of 1872-73.

On the other hand, having succeeded in repressing brigandage, which was the

principal resource of the Turkomans, Russia is bound to encourage them to gain their livelihood by labour, and especially by agriculture. This last object could hardly be obtained if, for the purpose of increasing Afghan territory, the Turkomans were to be ejected from cultivable lands, which are very sparse in those countries, and with which the Afghan population could do nothing. Moreover, the Imperial Cabinet has already previously had the opportunity of remarking that it is not at all by an extension of his territory, but rather by a sincere understanding between the two Great Powers, that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan would find the guarantee of security which he appears to be seeking for his dominions.

These are, M. l'Ambassadeur, the considerations to which the Imperial Cabinet attaches the highest importance, and which it would like to see inserted in the instructions with which the two Governments will have to furnish the Boundary Commissioners.

Far from attacking the interests of the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan, these considerations only tend to remove every ground of misunderstanding and of complication, and to insure the stability of the arrangements to be made. From this point of view they seem in entire conformity with those of Her Majesty's Government as they appear in the Memorandum of the 25th July (6th August).

I trust therefore that Her Majesty's Government will be good enough to receive the above observations as a new proof of the value which the Imperial Cabinet attaches to the consolidation of the friendly relations between the two Powers, and that they will not refuse to act accordingly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 81.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 20, 1884.

IN a telegram dated the 11th instant your Excellency states that the Russian Government wish to lay down certain principles in the instructions to the Commissioners on the Afghan Boundary, and to insure that the whole tribe of Saryk Turkomans from the Yolatan southwards to the Afghan frontier posts should be placed under the influence of the Russian authorities.

I have to state that Her Majesty's Government cannot anticipate the decision of the Commission with regard to the exact line of frontier, nor would they feel themselves justified in giving any instructions to their Commissioners, the result of which would be to alienate from the Ameer, without his consent, territories to which he lays claim.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 82.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, August 20.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 20, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that M. de Giers this afternoon told me that, in answer to his inquiries of the Minister of War, he had learnt that the Russian escort which would accompany the Commission for laying down the north-western boundary of Afghanistan will consist of from 200 to 250 Cossacks, depending upon the strength of the companies. His Excellency added that there would be no infantry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 83.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 23, 1884.

I HAVE to request your Excellency to inform the Russian Government that the instructions to Sir P. Lumsden, Her Majesty's Commissioner for the demarcation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, have now been drawn up, and are based upon the principles laid down in my despatch of the 5th instant.

Sir P. Lumsden will leave London for Tehran early in September, travelling viâ Poti and Baku.

Your Excellency will express a hope on the part of Her Majesty's Government that instructions will be furnished to the Russian Commissioner in the same sense as those which have been given to Sir P. Lumsden.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 84.

Earl Granville to Major-General Sir P. S. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, August* 25, 1884.

HER Majesty having been pleased to appoint you to be her Commissioner for the demarcation of the north-western boundary of Afghanistan, it becomes my duty to furnish you with the following general instructions.

2. You are aware that when the question of the Afghan frontier came for the first time, in 1870, prominently before Her Majesty's Government, the Governor-General of India in Council considered that the north-west frontier of that State should run in a south-westerly direction from a point on the Oxus between Khoja Saleh and Kerki, skirting and including the Provinces of Balkh, Maimena with its dependencies of Andkoi, &c., and Herat with its dependencies between the Murghab and the Heri-Rud, and that an agreement was entered into in 1872-73 between the Government of Her Majesty and that of Russia, in which it was laid down that Afghan territory in the north-west along the Oxus should be held to cease at Khoja Saleh, and that within the Ameer's dominions should be comprised the internal districts of Aksha, Seripul, Maimena, Shibarghan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans. The western Afghan frontier, it was added, between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian Province of Khorassan, "is well known and need not here be defined." This definition of the north-west boundary of Afghanistan was deemed at the time to be sufficiently accurate for the purposes of the agreement, and no question arose, therefore, as to the actual examination of the ground on the spot.

3. The course of events, however, in Central Asia, and especially the recent acquisitions of Russia, have rendered it apparent that the time has arrived when it is necessary that the boundary should be more precisely defined. This step has become, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, all the more urgent on account of the engagement which this country has entered into with the Ameer of Afghanistan to the effect that if any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of His Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid him to such extent and in such manner as may appear to them necessary in repelling it, provided that His Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations. Their opinion in this respect has been strengthened by the anxiety which His Highness has, since his accession to power, evinced as to the condition of his north-western boundaries, and the strong desire he has signified that the exact limits up to which those boundaries extend may be made known to him in some definite form. Accordingly, in the early part of this year, in response to wishes more than once expressed by the Government of Russia, Her Majesty's Government proposed that the arrangements of 1873 should be completed by a more exact definition of the Afghan boundary, and the communications between the two Governments have resulted in the appointment of an Anglo-Russian Commission for this purpose. To the assembly of this Commission, and to the general course of policy which Her

Majesty's Government have followed in the matter, the Ameer of Afghanistan has given his full consent and adherence.

4. Her Majesty's Government desire to leave you a large discretion in the discharge of the duties which you have undertaken, and they will therefore confine themselves to an expression of their general views on some of the more important points with which the Commission will have to deal. Your primary duty will be to ascertain the true limits of Afghan territory to which the agreement of 1872-73 applied. But whilst in defining these limits you will be guided by the political relations of the tribes occupying the country in which your operations lie, and will recognize all the legitimate rights of the Ameer, you will, also, in your final recommendations and decisions, bear carefully in mind the importance, in order to reduce to a minimum the risk of future complications, of providing that no obligations shall be imposed on His Highness which he would be unwilling to assume, or could not, in practice, adequately fulfil.

5. The first question to engage your attention will presumably be the exact point on the Heri-Rud from which the Afghan frontier-line is to run. Her Majesty's Government think that this is a matter which can only be settled after the locality has been examined on the spot by competent officers. They will not, therefore, attempt to arrive beforehand at a conclusion which, in the absence of proper information, might in the end retard rather than assist the objects of the Commission. They think it right, however, to remind you that they have hitherto assumed, according to the best information possessed by them, that the point on the Heri-Rud up to which Afghan territory extends is in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs. At the same time it appears to them that, if any insurmountable difficulty occur in thus fixing it, a good frontier-line might be obtained at or near Pul-i-Khatun, this place having the advantage of certain ranges of hills, which, meeting the Heri-Rud near it, are believed to form a good natural boundary.

6. It seems, however, from recent trustworthy reports, that since the discovery of an easy road on the right bank of the Heri-Rud from Sarakhs to the vicinity of Herat, the Persian Governor of Khorassan has placed outposts on Afghan territory, of which the southernmost is near the Khombau Pass. It is not improbable, therefore, that one of the earliest difficulties which you may have to meet will be a claim on the part of the local Persian authorities to certain parts of the territory through which this road runs. Her Majesty's Government have no reason to attribute any validity to such a claim, and you should therefore reject it without hesitation. A merely temporary occupation by the Persians of certain outposts cannot be allowed to set aside the permanent rights of the Afghan Ruler.

7. Some difficulty may also be raised as to the recognition of Afghan rights over Panjdeh, and this subject will require very careful attention. So far as Her Majesty's Government are informed, it appears that Panjdeh is a district of the Afghan province of Badkis, and that it is considered by the Afghans to form a part of Afghanistan. It is stated that the Turkoman tribes who have settled at Panjdeh during the last quarter of a century have fully acknowledged that they are within Afghan territory, that they have accordingly paid revenue in some form or other to the Herat authorities, and that a Naib or Deputy of the Governor of Herat has, as a rule, resided amongst them, the names of the officials who have done so before and since 1873 being well known or easily ascertainable. In this matter, however, Her Majesty's Government in no way desire to control your action by an absolute expression of their own opinion. They are rather content to await the result of your local inquiries, and to rely on your discretion and judgment in arriving at a proper conclusion in regard to it, bearing in mind that the object of the present negotiations is that a lasting and satisfactory arrangement on the whole question may be reached, and that the Ameer may be assigned a good working frontier.

8. As to the further line of boundary from the Murghab to the Oxus, Her Majesty's Government have not sufficient information to form any decided opinion upon its details. It may be presumed, however, that the line might with advantage be traced along the the skirts of cultivation of Maimena and Andkoi, and they do not anticipate that you will have any special difficulty in coming to a satisfactory decision on the subject.

9. Her Majesty's Government trust that no serious divergence of opinion may arise between you and your Russian colleague, but you will of course submit to them through this Office any question upon which you may find it impossible to arrive at an agreement, with full explanations of the points at issue, and of the views which you have formed respecting them.

10. You will be assisted in your duties by Mr. A. Condie Stephen, C.B., C.M.G., Colonel C. E. Stewart, C.I.E., and Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway. Captain A. F. Barrow, of the Bengal Staff Corps, will accompany you from England as Private Secretary and Aide-de-camp, as also will Nawab Mirza Hassan Ali Khan, C.I.E., who has been appointed your native Attaché. On your arrival at Tehran, *en route* to the frontier, you will be good enough, in consultation with Her Majesty's Minister at the Shah's Court, to complete all necessary arrangements for telegraphic correspondence with this country and with India, and you will also take all necessary steps, before commencing the demarcation of the boundary, to establish good postal communications both with Tehran and with Calcutta. You will address your Reports to this Office, forwarding them under flying seal through Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran.

11. In conclusion, I have only to add that Her Majesty's Government place entire confidence in your discretion and judgment, and that you may rely upon their full support in the important mission with which you have been intrusted.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 85.

Earl Granville to Sir R. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, August* 27, 1884, 4·5 P.M.

SIR P. LUMSDEN and the other Members of Afghan Boundary Commission will leave London on 4th September, arriving at Tehran about the 25th.

An escort of Indian troops with British officers will come by Beloochistan and Herat to meet the Commission about the 1st November at Sarakhs.

No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August* 23, 1884.

I HAD the honour to receive your Lordship's telegram of the 20th instant late on that day, relating to the wish expressed by the Russian Government that the entire tribe of Saryk Turkomans, who dwell to the south of Merv, should be placed under the influence of their authorities, and that this principle should form a part of the instructions to the boundary Commissioners.

On the following day I addressed to M. de Giers a note, of which a copy is inclosed, conveying to his Excellency the statements made by your Lordship in the above-mentioned telegram with reference to the request made by the Russian Government upon this subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, August* 9 (21), 1884.

ON the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 30th July (11th August) of this year, I dispatched a telegram to Earl Granville, informing him of the desire expressed by the Imperial Government that the entire tribe of Saryk Turkomans, residing from Yolatan on the Murghab southwards to the frontier posts of Afghanistan, should be placed under the influence of the Russian authorities, and that this principle should form part of the instructions with which the Commissioners should be provided.

I subsequently transmitted a copy of your Excellency's note to his Lordship, and I have now the honour to inform you that I received from him, last night, a telegram in reply to mine above mentioned, in which his Lordship states that it is not in the power of Her Majesty's Government to anticipate the decision which the Commission may arrive at with regard to the exact line of frontier, nor would they feel justified in

giving such instructions as would involve the alienation, without the consent of the Ameer of Afghanistan, of territories claimed by His Highness.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 87.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, August 25, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, in compliance with the instruction conveyed in your Lordship's telegram of the 23rd instant, respecting the Afghan frontier, I am this day addressing to M. de Giers the note of which a copy is inclosed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 87.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, August 13 (25), 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to state that I yesterday received a telegram from Earl Granville, directing me to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have settled the instructions with which the British Commissioner for laying down the north-western boundary of Afghanistan will be provided, on the principles indicated in the note which, in accordance with his Lordship's instructions, I addressed to your Excellency on the 25th July (6th August) of this year.

Earl Granville has also desired me to express the hope which is entertained by Her Majesty's Government, that the Imperial Government will give instructions in the same sense to the Russian Commissioner, who shall be appointed, and to add that the British Commissioner, General Sir Peter Lumsden, will leave England for Tehran early in September by way of Poti and Baku.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 88.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received September 1.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, August 27, 1884.*

I HAVE learnt upon very good authority that the Russian Government have finally decided at once to carry out the construction of the railway from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad, that a contract has been already made for the supply of the rails, and that they will be sent down the Volga and the Caspian to Krasnovodsk.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 89.

Extract from a Letter addressed to His Excellency the Viceroy of India by His Highness the Ameer of Afghanistan and its Dependencies, dated June 30, 1884.—(Received at the Foreign Office, September 4, 1884.)

(Translation.)

WITH regard to what your Excellency writes,* that "a well qualified Afghan officer, before the Representatives of the two Governments meet, should come to India in order to explain your Highness' views to me in detail, and then return to the

* See No. 67.

Afghan frontier by way of Cabul," I write to inform your Excellency that there does not exist in my personal establishment, or in the train of the officials of this Government, any man who, being possessed of the necessary qualifications and knowledge of all the frontiers, may be able to distinguish Afghan territory from that of others, nor do I know of any one whom I could implicitly trust, on account of his intelligence and penetration, with such an important work as this. But, it is possible that there may be found on every frontier of Afghanistan a man who, possessing superiority and distinction (above others), may have a correct and perfect knowledge of the minutiæ of his own border, and that of others in that particular tract (part) of the country, and who may be able to give proper answers to any questions that might be put to him. Therefore, I am now going to select and hold in readiness such men as are acquainted with the boundaries of every tract and quarter of my country, at every point and locality on the northern and western frontiers, so that they may wait on the Commissioners of the two Governments, and be prepared for questions and answers (discussion) when they, the Commissioners, arrive at and pass by those frontiers.

No. 90.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, September 7.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September 7*, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have this day received a note from M. de Giers, in which his Excellency states that Major-General Zelenoi, the Russian Commissioner, will meet Sir Peter Lumsden at Sarakhs about the 13th October.

The Russian Commissioner will be instructed to come to an understanding with his colleague as to the mode of procedure in the work of delimitation, and to seek jointly with him an arrangement which will tend to remove as far as possible all motives for misunderstanding and complication. In the meantime M. de Giers, thinks it urgent that the Afghan authorities should be prevented from making any attempt at territorial encroachment. A Memorandum is also inclosed, in which his Excellency begs to remind Her Majesty's Government that it has been agreed that no Afghan Delegate shall be admitted into the Commission, and declares that the Russian Government will examine only the opinions of the Commissioners, and will acknowledge no binding value with regard to those of the Afghan authorities.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 91.

Consul-General Perry to Earl Granville.—(Received September 10.)

(Telegraphic.) *Odessa, September 9*, 1884, 6·30 P.M.

SIR P. LUMSDEN wishes me to inform your Lordship that he cannot probably reach Sarakhs before 7th November, in consequence of the distance which the escort have to traverse.

No. 92.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received September 11.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September 7*, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note which I have received from M. de Giers relating to the Afghan Boundary Commission. Under the same envelope I found a Memorandum, a copy of which is also inclosed.

M. de Giers in this note informs me that, notwithstanding the difference of opinion which has arisen between the two Governments with regard to the instructions to be given to the Commissioners, the Imperial Government desire not to lose the opportunity of removing for ever all grounds of misunderstanding and rivalry in Central Asia, and to complete the work inaugurated in 1872-73.

Major-General Zelenoi will, his Excellency states, join General Sir Peter Lumsden

at Sarakhs on about the 1st (13th) October, and will come to an understanding with his colleague as to the mode of procedure in the work of delimitation. He will be instructed to seek, in conjunction with his colleague, an arrangement which may be of a nature to remove, as far as possible, all grounds for misunderstanding and complications.

But his Excellency adds that the Imperial Cabinet are fully convinced that the basis of such an arrangement can only be found in a combination which would have for its object to establish a line of boundary as much in conformity as possible with the geographical and ethnographical conditions of the region in which the boundary will lie.

M. de Giers also expresses the opinion that, in the meantime, it is urgent that the Afghan authorities should be prevented from seeking to make territorial encroachments, which might neutralize the effects of the conciliatory intentions of the two Powers, and create serious obstacles to the demarcation of the boundary.

The Memorandum refers to my note of the 21st instant, in which I stated that Her Majesty's Government would not feel justified in giving such instructions as would involve the alienation, without the consent of the Ameer of Afghanistan, of the territories claimed by His Highness.

M. de Giers, with reference to this statement, reminds me that it has been agreed between the two Governments that no Afghan Delegate will be admitted into the Commission, and that the two Governments, as well as the Commissioners, will alone have to decide upon the different points relating to the tracing of the boundary.

His Excellency therefore announces that the Imperial Cabinet will limit themselves to an examination of the opinions of the Commissioners, and will on their part give no binding value to those of the Afghan authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON

Inclosure 1 in No. 92.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, le* 25 *Août*, 1884.

J'AI reçu les notes que votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'adresser en date du 9 (21), et du 13 (25) courant, au sujet de la délimitation de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan.

Dans la première de ces deux notes vous me signalez les motifs qui empêchent le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine d'adopter pour base des instructions, devant guider les Commissaires Délimitateurs dans l'accomplissement de leur tâche, la proposition contenue dans ma note du 30 Juillet dernier, et qui impliquerait de la part de l'Émir de l'Afghanistan une renonciation à toute velléité d'agrandissement de ses États aux dépens des terres habitées par les Turcomans Saryk.

Quant à la seconde note de votre Excellence, il en résulte que le Gouvernement de la Reine vient de munir son Commissaire d'instructions conformes aux principes exposés dans son Mémorandum du 25 Juillet (6 Août), et selon lesquels la Commission de Délimitation serait tenue de se régler sur les relations politiques des tribus habitant les contrées qu'il s'agit de délimiter, de rechercher les moyens de réduire à un minimum possible les chances de futures complications, et de ne point imposer à l'Émir d'Afghanistan des obligations qu'il ne voudrait point assumer, ou qu'il serait hors d'état de remplir.

Nonobstant la divergence de vues qui vient de se produire entre les deux Cabinets, mais qui pourrait n'avoir sa source que dans l'insuffisance des informations que l'on possède sur les contrées qu'il est question de délimiter, le Cabinet Impérial tient à ne point laisser échapper l'occasion qui s'offre aux deux Puissances d'écarter à tout jamais tout motif de malentendus ou de rivalité entre elles sur le terrain de l'Asie Centrale, et de compléter l'œuvre de conciliation heureusement inaugurée en 1872-73.

Des dispositions viennent d'être prises pour que le Commissaire Russe, M. le Général-Major Zelenoi, puisse rejoindre M. le Général Sir Peter Lumsden, vers le 1er Octobre à Sarakhs, où il aura à s'entendre avec son collègue Britannique sur la marche des travaux de délimitation.

En conformité des instructions dont vient d'être muni Sir Peter Lumsden, le Général Zelenoi sera invité à rechercher conjointement avec lui les éléments d'un arrangement qui serait de nature à écarter autant que possible les motifs de malen-

tendus et de complications. Pour ce qui est des bases d'un tel arrangement je ne puis que vous répéter, M. l'Ambassadeur, que, suivant une conviction intime du Cabinet Impérial, qui est le résultat d'une étude consciencieuse des renseignements recueillis par ses Agents, celles-ci ne sauraient être trouvées que dans une combinaison qui aurai pour objet d'établir entre les sphères d'influence respectives des deux Puissances une ligne de démarcation aussi conforme que possible aux conditions géographiques et ethnographiques des contrées formant la zone de la future délimitation.

Le projet du Cabinet Impérial, qui a fait l'objet de ma note du 30 Juillet dernier, répond à tous les points de vue à ces exigences, et je me plais à espérer qu'après s'être rendu compte des conditions locales, le Commissaire Britannique ne manquera pas d'en apprécier les avantages incontestables.

Je ne puis non plus m'empêcher de profiter de la présente occasion pour rappeler à votre Excellence qu'il est urgent d'empêcher, en attendant, les autorités Afghanes de se livrer à des empiétements territoriaux, lesquels ne sauraient manquer de neutraliser les effets des intentions conciliantes des deux Puissances, et de créer de graves obstacles à la délimitation.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Ministry for Foreign Affairs, August* 25, 1884.

I HAVE received the notes which your Excellency did me the honour to address to me on the 9th (21st) and the 13th (25th) instant on the subject of the delimitation of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan.

In the first of these notes you state the motives which prevent Her Majesty's Government from adopting, as the basis of the instructions which should guide the Boundary Commissioners in their labours, the proposal contained in my note of the 30th of last July, which involved a renunciation on the part of the Ameer of Afghanistan of all desire to extend his territories at the expense of the lands inhabited by the Saryk Turkomans.

With reference to your Excellency's second note, it states that Her Majesty's Government has just furnished their Commissioners with instructions in harmony with the principles laid down in their Memorandum of the 25th July (6th August), in virtue of which the Boundary Commission will have to give information with respect to the political relations of the tribes inhabiting the districts which are to be delimitated, to seek for the means of reducing the chances of future complications to a minimum, and not to impose on the Ameer of Afghanistan conditions which he would not wish to assume, or which he would be unable to fulfil.

Notwithstanding the divergence of views which has arisen between the two Cabinets, and which can only be accounted for by the insufficiency of the information possessed with reference to the countries in question, the Imperial Cabinet is anxious not to let slip the opportunity which presents itself to the two Powers of removing for ever all reason for misunderstandings and rivalry on Central Asian soil, and to complete the work of conciliation happily begun in 1872-73.

Arrangements have just been made for the Russian Commissioner, Major-General Zelenoi, to join General Sir Peter Lumsden about the 1st October at Sarakhs, when he can come to an understanding with his British colleague as to the course of the work of delimitation.

In accordance with the instructions with which Sir Peter Lumsden has been furnished, General Zelenoi will be instructed to endeavour to discover, in conjunction with him, the element of an arrangement of such a character as to avoid, as far as possible, causes for misunderstanding and complications. As regards the bases of such an arrangement, I can only repeat to you, M. l'Ambassadeur, that according to the thorough conviction of the Imperial Cabinet, resulting from a conscientious study of the information collected by its agents, such bases can only be found in an arrangement, the object of which would be to establish between the respective spheres of influence of the two Powers a line of demarcation as far as possible in harmony with the geographical and ethnographical conditions of the countries forming the zone of the future delimitation.

The project of the Imperial Cabinet, which was the subject of my note of the 30th July last, meets those requirements from every point of view, and I trust that when he has made himself acquainted with the locality, the British Commissioner will not fail to appreciate its incontestable advantages.

I must moreover take this opportunity to remind your Excellency that it is

necessary, in the meanwhile, to prevent the Afghan authorities from territorial encroachments, which could not fail to neutralize the effects of the conciliatory intentions of the two Powers, and to put serious obstacles in the way of the delimitation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 92.

Memorandum.

DANS sa note en date du 9 (21) Août, son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur Britannique a bien voulu annoncer au Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères que le Cabinet de Londres ne saurait munir son Commissaire pour la délimitation de l'Afghanistan d'instructions impliquant une aliénation, sans le consentement de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan, de territoires sur lesquels ce dernier élèverait des prétentions.

Dans le but de prévenir tout malentendu à ce sujet, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères croit de son devoir de rappeler à M. l'Ambassadeur qu'il a déjà été convenu entre les deux Gouvernements qu'aucun Délégué Afghan ne sera admis dans la Commission de Délimitation, et que les deux Gouvernements, ainsi que leurs Commissaires respectifs, auront seuls le droit de se prononcer sur les différents points se rattachant au tracé de la frontière.

Eu égard à cette circonstance, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères se fait un devoir de prévenir M. l'Ambassadeur que le Cabinet Impérial se propose de se borner à l'examen des opinions qui seront émises par les Commissaires des deux Puissances, et que, pour sa part, il ne saurait reconnaître aucune valeur obligatoire aux avis des autorités Afghanes.

St. Pétersbourg, le 25 *Août*, 1884.

(Translation.)

IN his note of the 9th (21st) August his Excellency the English Ambassador was good enough to inform the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Cabinet of London could not furnish their Commissioners for the delimitation of the Afghan boundary with any instruction which would imply a surrender of any territories to which the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan might lay claim, without the consent of the latter.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding on this subject the Ministry for Foreign Affairs thinks it right to remind his Excellency that the two Governments have already agreed that no Afghan Delegate shall be admitted upon the Boundary Commission, and that the two Governments and their respective Commissioners shall alone have the right to give an opinion on the different points arising in connection with the frontier.

In view of this circumstance the Ministry for Foreign Affairs think it right to inform his Excellency that the Imperial Cabinet propose to confine themselves to an examination of the opinion given to the Commissioners of the two Powers, and that as far as they are concerned they could not recognize any binding value in the view of the Afghan authorities.

St. Petersburgh, August 25, 1884.

No. 93.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 15, 1884.

I HAVE to request your Excellency to inform the Russian Government that some time will necessarily elapse before the escort for the British Commissioners on the Afghan Boundary can arrive at the place of meeting, owing to the distance which they will have to march from India, and that, consequently, Sir Peter Lumsden will probably not be able to reach Sarakhs before the end of the first week in November.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 94.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received September 16, 10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tiflis, September 16, 1884, 5·10 P.M.*

AT an interview to-day Governor-General unofficially laid stress on delay of work of Commission being essential to Russia, and referred to difficulty of fixing point of departure, maintaining that the Heri-Rud mentioned in Clarendon Agreement only referred to stream south of Zoorabad, north of which it became Tejend. This was refuted. He also mentioned rumoured intention of Panjdeh Sariks migrating to Yulatan in the event of Afghan troops advancing.

Russian Commissioner, who was present, starts for St. Petersburgh to-morrow to receive final instructions. I named 7th November (N. S.) as date of Commission reaching Sarakhs.

No. 95.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 21, 3·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, September 21, 1884.*

SIR PETER LUMSDEN will reach Tehran to-morrow.

He arrives at Cazvin to-day.

No. 96.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September 23, 1884.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 7th instant, inclosing a note and a Memorandum from M. de Giers, stating fully the views of the Russian Government in respect to the Afghan Boundary Commission.

Your Excellency will express to M. de Giers the satisfaction of Her Majesty's Government at the arrangements made by the Russian Government, and assure his Excellency that the British Commissioner will act in a conciliatory spirit, and will do his utmost to arrive at an agreement satisfactory to both countries.

I am, &c.

(Signed GRANVILLE.

No. 97.

Mr. Godley to Mr. Currie.—(Received September 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of the Earl of Kimberley, forwards herewith, for Lord Granville's information, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy of India relative to the escort of the Afghan Boundary Commission.

India Office, September 25, 1884.

Inclosure in No. 97.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Telegraphic.) *Simla, September 24, 1884.*

BOUNDARY Commission. Camp started from Siriab 19th. Escort finally fixed, 200 infantry, 200 cavalry. Water and supply reported sufficient.

No. 98.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received September* 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 24, 1884.

IN accordance with the instruction contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 15th instant, I on the following day informed M. Vlangaly, in the absence of M. de Giers, that, owing to the great distance which the escort for the Afghan Boundary Commission would have to march from India, Her Majesty's Commissioner would not probably reach Sarakhs before the 7th November next.

M. Vlangaly expressed his satisfaction at this information, because, as his Excellency stated, the Russian Commissioner, General Zelenoi, was in Germany, when it was decided to appoint him for that service, that he had been obliged to return to the Caucasus, where he held a responsible office which he had to give up personally, and that it was necessary that he should come to St. Petersburgh to receive his instructions before he joined the Commission.

M. de Giers, whom I have since seen, expressed himself in the same sense.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 99.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, September* 27, 1884, 4·55 P.M.

INFORM the Russian Government that British escort for Afghan Boundary Commission will consist of 200 infantry and 200 cavalry.

No. 100.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received September* 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 27, 1884.

WITH reference to Sir Peter Lumsden's telegram from Tiflis of the 16th instant relating to the names given to different portions of the Heri-Rud, I have the honour to refer to the inclosure in my despatch of the 26th October, 1882, which is a translation of M. Lessar's notes of his journey from Askabad to Herat. This was printed in the Blue Book, "Central Asia No. 1 (1884)," at the 44th page of which will be found a paragraph in which it is distinctly stated that the "further course of the Heri-Rud northward and to the north-westward from Sarakhs is known under the name of the Tejend."

Sir Peter Lumsden is doubtless in possession of this Blue Book.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 101.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 1.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, September* 28, 1884.

I UNDERSTAND that M. Lessar, the Russian Engineer, has been appointed to be Assistant Commissioner on the Afghan Boundary Commission, and will leave St. Petersburgh in about ten days. M. de Giers had some time ago informed me that he was very anxious that this gentleman should be employed on the Commission, but that he had declined on the plea of ill-health.

Colonel Kulberg is to accompany the Commission as Chief Geodetist, and M. Ivanoff, who had travelled with Captain Putiata and M. Regel in the Pamir country, is the geologist of the party.

It appears that, notwithstanding the rumours which have lately been prevalent, Lieutenant-Colonel Alikhanoff has never been appointed to the Commission, and is in

no way connected with it. He will remain in his present position of Chief of the Merv district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 102.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 2, 5·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October 2, 1884.*

SIR P. LUMSDEN left Tehran to-day for Meshed, accompanied by a Mahmandar and an escort of Persian troops.

No. 103.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, October 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 2, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have just received a Memorandum from M. de Giers, in which it is stated that General Zelenoi, the Russian Commissioner for the Afghan boundary, will be unable to meet General Sir Peter Lumsden so soon as the 7th November, because his preparations will not be completed till December. His Excellency has learnt that in that climate nothing can be done till February, and he consequently proposes that the Commissioners should meet on the 27th January next.

The Memorandum adds that the Russian Government find objections to Sarakhs as the place of meeting for the Commission, and think that some other place, such as Pouli-Khatoum should be agreed upon.

They also urge that the two escorts should be reduced as much as possible on account of the difficulty of obtaining supplies for so large a force.

I shall have the honour of forwarding a copy of the above-mentioned Memorandum by to-morrow's post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 104.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 3, 1884.*

WHEN I called, on the 1st instant, upon M. de Giers, he informed me that he was about to send me a Memorandum upon some points respecting the Afghan Boundary Commission. His Excellency said that it was impossible for General Zelenoi to meet Sir Peter Lumsden by the 7th November next. The General had been ill, and had been prevented from coming to St. Petersburgh till now; that it would take him some time to study the question and to receive his instructions; and that after having done so, it would be necessary that he should visit Tiflis and Askabad to make inquiries there before he could join Sir Peter Lumsden. For these reasons it would be out of his power to be at the place of meeting till December.

His Excellency had received information that on account of the climate it would be impossible to proceed with the operations till February next, and that it would be useless that the Commissioners should meet before the beginning of that month.

M. de Giers went on to express his great regret that it should have been thought necessary to increase the force of the escort above what I had previously informed him it would consist of. He thought it quite unnecessary, as far as the safety of the Commission was concerned, and that the difficulty of provisioning so large a body of men would be very great. He expressed, too, his opinion very strongly that it was very undesirable that such a force should meet at Sarakhs, which was in Persian territory, and where, as well as in the immediate neighbourhood, the Turkomans were now in great numbers. At any rate, he urged that the escorts should not meet at

Sarakhs, and that another place should rather be chosen for the meeting of the Commission.

M. de Giers begged me to express his earnest hope that your Lordship would take these observations into consideration, and that Her Majesty's Government would agree that it would be advisable to change the place of meeting, and to reduce the escort as much as possible. Upon the latter point he expressed the opinion that if the Commissioners should, on meeting, think it expedient, a portion of the escort might be left at some place where it might be easier to obtain supplies than on the route on which the Commission would be employed.

I received last night the Memorandum which M. de Giers had promised, and have the honour to inclose a copy of it. It is of the same purport as his conversation on the 1st instant, but with a little more detail. It must be remembered that with regard to dates the old style is always understood in the documents issued by the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 104.

Memorandum.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères a été informé que M. le Général Sir Peter Lumsden, chargé de représenter le Gouvernement Britannique au sein de la Commission Russo-Anglaise qui aura à définir la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan, vient d'arriver à Téhéran, et qu'il se propose de se rendre prochainement à Sarakhs, où, conformément à une entente préalablement intervenue entre les deux Cabinets, les Commissaires respectifs devraient se rencontrer vers le 25 Octobre N.S. [*sic*].

Le Ministère se voit aujourd'hui dans la nécessité d'informer son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre que le Commissaire Russe, M. le Général Zelenoi, ne saurait rejoindre son collègue Britannique à la date convenue.

Ce retard n'est dû qu'à des circonstances complètement indépendantes de la volonté du Cabinet Impérial, et notamment à une maladie de M. le Général Zelenoi, qui l'a obligé de prolonger son séjour à l'étranger. N'étant arrivé que tout récemment à St. Pétersbourg, M. Zelenoi est tenu de se rendre à Tiflis, et ensuite à Askhabad, pour se concerter avec les autorités locales sur les détails de l'organisation de la section Russe de la Commission de Délimitation. Les préparatifs se rattachant à cette organisation ne pouvant être terminés que vers le mois de Décembre, il résulte des informations fournies au Cabinet Impérial que, vu les conditions climatiques des contrées que la Commission aura à parcourir, les travaux de délimitation ne sauraient être commencés à une époque aussi avancée de l'année, et qu'ils devront être ajournés jusqu'au mois de Février. Ce n'est qu'alors que la Commission pourra s'aventurer dans ces contrées sans crainte de se voir brusquement arrêté par des intempéries, et sans y exposer les chameaux du train, qui, comme l'ont prouvé de nombreuses expériences, sont complètement incapables de résister au froid.

Une entente préalable entre les Commissaires respectifs devant précéder l'ouverture des travaux, il semblerait opportun, vu les circonstances ci-dessus exposées, d'ajourner leur rencontre jusqu'au 15 Janvier prochain.

En dehors de ces considérations le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères croit devoir signaler à l'attention de M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre les points suivants:—

1. Malgré les divergences d'opinion qui pourraient se produire au sujet de la définition de l'extrémité occidentale de la frontière de l'Afghanistan comprise entre le Heri-Rud et le Mourghab, il demeure incontestable que ce n'est point à Sarakhs que pourrait être commencé le tracé, et que le point de départ de la frontière devrait être cherché plus au sud. Eu égard à cette considération le Cabinet Impérial est loin de penser que Sarakhs soit l'endroit le mieux approprié à la rencontre des Commissaires, et il lui semblerait d'autant plus urgent d'adopter à cet effet une autre localité, que le passage de l'escorte militaire Anglaise jusqu'à Sarakhs pourrait rencontrer de sérieux obstacles, attendu que la rive gauche du Tedjend fait partie du territoire Persan, et que sa rive droite est occupée par des Turcomans Salours, qui, depuis peu de temps, sont venus s'y réfugier au nombre de plus de 2,000 familles, et à l'établissement desquels les autorités de la province Trans-Caspienne sont tenues de veiller actuellement. Toute autre localité comme, par exemple, Pouli Khatoum, serait exempte des

inconvénients ci-dessus exposés, et le Cabinet Impérial serait vivement désireux de voir le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique adopter ce point pour la réunion des Commissaires.

2. La contrée se tendant à l'est du Tedjend étant complètement déserte le Cabinet Impérial pense qu'il y aurait lieu de prendre des dispositions pour que les escortes militaires des Commissaires respectifs soient réduites au minimum possible dans le but de prévenir les retards et les difficultés qu'éprouverait infailliblement le mouvement et le ravitaillement de corps considérables. Suivant l'avis du Cabinet Impérial la force numérique des deux escortes devrait être entièrement égale et les Commissaires respectifs pourraient être autorisés à s'entendre à ce sujet.

3. Ainsi qu'il a déjà été convenu entre les deux Gouvernements les Commissaires seront tenus en cas où de divergences d'opinion se produiraient entre eux d'en référer sans retard à leurs Gouvernements respectifs et de continuer en attendant leurs travaux. Ces travaux devraient avoir pour objet principal le levé et la description de la zone dans les limites de laquelle la ligne de démarcation devra être tracée, afin que les deux Gouvernements soit à mesure de disposer de tous les renseignements dont ils pouvaient avoir besoin pour procéder en connaissance de cause à la solution des points litigieux qui leur seraient soumis.

Le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères a l'honneur de prier M. l'Ambassadeur de vouloir bien signaler par la voie télégraphique les points ci-dessus exposés à l'attention du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique et de faire connaître un moment plus tôt au Ministère les dispositions que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté aurait jugé nécessaire d'adopter en conséquence.

St. Pétersbourg, le 19 *Septembre,* 1884.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been informed that General Sir Peter Lumsden, who has been charged with the representation of the British Government on the Russo-Anglian Commission to define the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, has just arrived at Tehran, and that he proposes to proceed shortly to Sarakhs, where, according to a previous understanding between the two Cabinets, the respective Commissioners are to meet about the 25th October (N.S.).

The Ministry finds itself now compelled to inform his Excellency the English Ambassador that General Zelenoi, the Russian Commissioner, will be unable to rejoin his British colleague at the date agreed upon.

This delay is caused by no other circumstances than by such as are completely independent of the desires of the Imperial Cabinet, the chief of which is an illness of General Zelenoi, which has compelled him to prolong his absence abroad. Having only just arrived at St. Petersburgh, M. Zelenoi must proceed first to Tiflis, and then to Askabad, to arrange with the local authorities about the details for the organization of the Russian section of the Boundary Commission. Since the preparations for this organization cannot be ended till about the month of December, it results from the information furnished to the Imperial Cabinet, that, considering the conditions of the climate in the countries through which the Commission will have to pass, the work of tracing the boundary cannot be commenced at such a late period of the year, and that it must be put off till the month of February. Only then will the Commission be able to venture into these districts without the fear of being suddenly stopped by the weather, and without exposing to this the transport camels which, as is proved by numerous experiences, are completely unable to resist the cold.

Since a previous understanding between the respective Commissioners ought to precede the commencement of the work, it would seem more fitting, in view of the circumstances stated above, to postpone their meeting till the 15th January next.

Besides these considerations, the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs consider it their duty to draw the attention of the English Ambassador to the following points:—

1. In spite of the differences of opinion which might arise on the subject of the definition of the western extremity of the Afghan frontier between the Heri-Rud and the Murghab, it remains indisputable that Sarakhs is not the place where the work of delimitation could be commenced, and that the point for the commencement of the frontier ought to be sought for more to the south. In view of this consideration, the Imperial Cabinet is far from thinking that Sarakhs is the most suitable spot for the meeting of the Commissioners, and it would seem to them all the more necessary to adopt another locality for this purpose, since the journey of the English military

escort to Sarakhs might meet with serious obstacles, the left bank of the Tedjend being in Persian territory and the right occupied by the Salor Turkomans, who took refuge there, in number over 2,000 families, a short time ago, and over whose establishment the authorities of the Transcaspian Province have to watch at the present time. Any other locality, such, for example, as Pul-i-Khatun, would be free from the inconveniences set forth above, and the Imperial Cabinet would have much pleasure in seeing Her Britannic Majesty's Government adopt this place for the point of meeting of the Commissioners.

2. Since the territory to the east of the Tedjend is nothing but a desert, the Imperial Cabinet considers that it would be expedient to arrange that the military escorts of the respective Commissioners should be reduced as much as possible, in order to avoid the delays and difficulties which would necessarily attend the movements and victualling of considerable bodies. In the opinion of the Imperial Cabinet the numerical force of the two escorts should be absolutely equal, and the Commissioners on both sides might be authorized to communicate with each other on this subject.

3. The Commissioners shall be instructed, as has been already arranged between the two Governments, to refer, without delay, to their respective Governments, if differences of opinion should arise between them, and to continue their work meanwhile. The principal object of this work should be the survey and description of the zone within which the line of demarcation ought to be drawn, in order that the two Governments may be in possession of all the details which they may require to proceed, with full information, to the solution of disputed points which may be submitted to them.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has the honour to request M. l'Ambassadeur to be so good as to draw the attention of Her Britannic Majesty's Government by telegraph to the points set forth above as soon as possible, and to inform the Ministry of the action which Her Majesty's Government may have judged it necessary to take in consequence.

St. Petersburgh, September 19, 1884.

No. 105.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 11, 1884.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 2nd instant, inclosing a Memorandum from M. de Giers respecting the Afghan Boundary Commission.

Her Majesty's Government regret that they are unable to alter the arrangements in regard to the Indian escort which is to accompany Sir Peter Lumsden. The escort, which only consists of 200 infantry and 200 cavalry, is already on its way to the Helmund, and it is therefore too late to make any change in the numbers of the force or in the date of its arrival on the frontier.

With reference to M. de Giers' proposal that the Commission should assemble at Pul-i-Khatum, I have to request your Excellency to point out that the Russian Government having formally agreed to Sarakhs as the place of meeting, Her Majesty's Government cannot now consent to any other place being named.

Your Excellency will be good enough to inform M. de Giers that Sir Peter Lumsden has left Tehran for Meshed, and you will express to him the earnest hope of Her Majesty's Government that the Russian Government will adhere to the agreement arrived at between the two Governments, and that they will instruct their Commissioner to reach Sarakhs in time to commence the work of delimitation before the winter sets in.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 106.

Earl Granville to Sir R. Thomson.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 11, 1884.

IT having been now arranged between the Russian Government and that of Her Majesty that the British and Russian members of the Commission for the delimita-

tion of the north-western boundary of Afghanistan should meet at Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Heri-Rud, I should wish you to inform the Persian Government in writing of the proposed meeting of the Commission on Persian territory.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 107.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 14, 1·20 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 14, 1884.

SIR P. LUMSDEN leaves Shahrood to-morrow.

No. 108.

Mr. Godley to Mr. Currie.—(Received October 17.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of the Earl of Kimberley, forwards herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a telegram which has been received from the Viceroy, reporting the arrival at Galicha of the first relay of the escort of the Afghan Boundary Commission.

India Office, October 16, 1884.

Inclosure in No. 108.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Telegraphic.) *Simla, October* 16, 1884.

BOUNDARY Commission.

First relay reached Galicha, 163 miles from Nushki, and about 40 from Helmund, on 11th. Health pretty good.

No. 109.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received October 17, 9·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *October* 16, 1884.

WE shall be at Nishapur on 26th and Meshed on 30th October, and shall reach Sarakhs on 7th November.

No. 110.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 18, 1884.

I HAVE been informed by Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran that the British Commissioner for the demarcation of the Afghan boundary will arrive at Sarakhs on the 7th proximo, and I have to request that you will point out to M. de Giers that delay is most inconvenient and will greatly increase the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory settlement.

Your Excellency will urge the Russian Government to arrange for the commencement of negotiations as soon as possible in accordance with the agreement come to between the two Governments in reliance on which Her Majesty's Government have acted.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 111.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received October 22.)

My Lord, *Tehran, September 29*, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that I reached Tehran on the morning of the 22nd instant, having met with every attention on the part of the Russian and Persian authorities on the journey through Southern Russia, and from Enzeli to this capital.

At Odessa, Batoum, Tiflis, and Baku, everything was done by the local officials to facilitate the transport of our heavy luggage, and the comfort of our journey across the Caucasus was considerably increased by the fact that the railway authorities were good enough to place a saloon carriage at our disposal.

Nor were the arrangements made by the Persian authorities for our journey from the Caspian to Tehran of a less cordial nature. On arrival at Enzeli I was received by one of the Shah's Gholam Pishkedmets, an officer of position, who had been sent by His Majesty to welcome me to Persia, and having been conveyed in His Majesty's cutter across the inland lake known as the Dead Sea, I was received at Peri Bazaar by an "Istekball," or complimentary deputation, headed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ghilan, and sent by the Governor of Resht, who had received instructions to place a house at my disposal in the event of my passing the night in that town. After receiving a visit from the Governor of the province, who welcomed me in the Shah's name, I set out for Kasvin and Tehran, where similar complimentary ceremonies were repeated, preparatory to my leaving for Gulahek, the summer residence of the British Legation, where I have been very hospitably entertained by Sir R. Thomson.

Yesterday I had a private audience of the Shah, to whom I was presented by Sir R. Thomson. His Majesty, who received me very graciously, being good enough to express a hope that the arrangements made for my journey from Resht had been satisfactory, and to give instructions to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that every assistance should be rendered me by the Persian local authorities on my journey hence to Sarakhs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

No. 112.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 14*, 1884.

A FEW days ago M. de Giers told me that General Zelenoi was desirous of paying me a visit, and asked whether I would receive him. I of course answered that it would give me great pleasure to see him; and his Excellency then added that M. Zinovieff, the head of the Asiatic Department in the Russian Foreign Office, would accompany the General. He said that M. Zinovieff was thoroughly acquainted with all the preparations which are being made for the Afghan Boundary Commission, and that he hoped I would hear what he and the General might say as if it came from himself.

The two gentlemen accordingly called upon me yesterday. I began the conversation by expressing my earnest hope that, in compliance with the wish of Her Majesty's Government, General Zelenoi would start as soon as possible for Sarakhs, in order that the operations of the Commission might be commenced before the winter set in. I said that the difficulties which the British Commission and escort had to contend with in organizing themselves and reaching Sarakhs were incomparably greater than any which the Russian Commission and escort were likely to meet with, and I could not understand what could be the cause of so much delay. I pointed out to them that Sir P. Lumsden was already at Meshed, and that the escort was on its way to Sarakhs.

General Zelenoi replied that when he first learnt the wish of the Imperial Government that he should undertake the office of Commissioner he was at Franzensbad, where he had gone on account of his health; that it was some time before he could leave that place, that he was then obliged to go to Tiflis to arrange the business of the office which he held there, and that it was only within the last few days that he had been able to come to St. Petersburgh for the purpose of gaining information with

regard to the service in which he was to be engaged and to receive his instructions; that he would be obliged to return to Tiflis for certain information which he expected to be able to obtain there, and that he should then proceed to Askabad to make his final preparations at that place. General Zelenoi added that his health was still not good, and that he felt it would be impossible for him to meet his British colleague till January next.

I then brought the conversation upon an observation which had been made to me by M. Zinovieff on the previous day, to the effect that Sarakhs had never been thought of by the Imperial Government as the point of departure for the north-western boundary of Afghanistan, which I at once denied.

For yesterday's interview I looked out a number of Russian maps, which marked the boundary from Sarakhs eastward and northward to Khodja Saleh. He retorted that these maps were copied from English ones. I replied that I believed it to be the contrary, and that all the maps which placed the point of departure eastward from the Heri-Rud far south of Sarakhs had been published since the negotiations for the Commission had been entered upon.

General Zelenoi then made some observations, which seemed to be the principal object of the visit. He declared that as he had accepted the appointment, he was most anxious that the labours of the Commission should be crowned with success (and this I strictly believe), but that he much feared they might result in failure, because the Commission had no basis to go upon: he had already been a member of similar Commissions, but they had in each case had something to go upon, some salient points marked out for their guidance, or a general line indicated, in which they were to work out the details of the boundary. In this case there was nothing, and he therefore thought it very advisable that a certain zone should be agreed upon between the two Governments within which the Commissioners should be instructed to consider where the north-western boundary of Afghanistan might lie, and outside of which the Commission should not be allowed to extend their explorations. For instance, he added, the zone might be between a line drawn from Sarakhs to Khodja Saleh, which should be the limit to the north, and another from a point on the Heri-Rud far to the south of Sarakhs, eastwards and then northwards to Meimena, Andkoi, and Khodja Saleh, so that the boundary might be laid down in accordance with the arrangement of 1872-73 as far as that part of it was concerned. It was evident that the General wished that this point should be as far south as the Parapamisus range of mountains, in the belief that there was no range of hills to the north of them which would make so desirable a boundary. He urged, too, that wherever the line should be decided upon, it ought not to separate one portion of the tribe of Salor Turkomans to the south from the remainder of it to the north.

I replied that, in my opinion, it was entirely a matter for the consideration and decision of the Commission what should be the theatre of their explorations and inquiries, and that it was most improbable that Her Majesty's Government would be disposed to limit the action of their Commissioner by prescribing to him exactly the extent of territory, outside of which he was not to carry out his inquiries.

But General Zelenoi insisted upon his suggestion in the most earnest manner; he said that supposing they were to meet some Afghan outposts who had advanced beyond what had ever been Afghan territory, and that these outposts were to desire them to withdraw, what could they then do?

I replied that no such case was likely to occur; that the Ameer of Afghanistan was very desirous that the boundary should be definitively laid down, and that he would not be likely to allow any opposition to be made to the proceedings of the Commission by those who were under his orders. I believed also that the Indian Government had already taken steps to secure the friendly co-operation of the Ameer on behalf of the labours of the Commission.

"But again," said General Zelenoi, "if we wished to go to Penjdeh, which, I believe, is already occupied by Afghan troops for the purpose of investigating whether it is really within Afghan territory, and we were refused admittance, what would happen?"

I again assured the General that I felt convinced that there was no danger of such a difficulty. But when he hinted at the possibility that Sir Peter Lumsden might, himself, refuse to proceed to certain points where his Russian colleague might wish to institute inquiries, I replied that, considering how anxious Her Majesty's Government were that the Commission should bring the labours to a successful issue, there seemed to be no ground whatever for such a supposition.

But General Zelenoi insisted most strongly upon the expediency of an agreement

between the two Governments fixing the zone or extent of territory, throughout the whole of which the Commission should have full power to prosecute their investigations. I at length, therefore, consented to acquaint your Lordship with the substance of his observations upon this matter, assuring him at the same time that I did not believe that Her Majesty's Government would accede to such a proposal.

Your Lordship may, however, perhaps think it expedient to give an assurance that the Ameer of Afghanistan will not place any obstacle in the way of the Commission extending their inquiries even to within what His Highness may consider to be Afghan territory.

I take it for granted that M. Zinovieff will report the substance of our conversation to M. de Giers, who, he told me, would be at his Office yesterday. I found, however, that he had not come to town, probably because it was a holiday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 113.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 16, 1884.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 14th instant, in which I reported the substance of a conversation I had had with M. Zinovieff and General Zelenoi, I have the honour to state that I yesterday afternoon saw M. de Giers, who told me that M. Zinovieff had given him the details of that conversation, and he earnestly entreated that your Lordship would take into consideration the suggestion made by General Zelenoi that a definite zone should be agreed upon between the two Governments, within which it would be in the power of the Commissioners to prosecute their inquiries and carry on their explorations. His Excellency made use more or less of the same arguments in favour of this suggestion which had been set forth by General Zelenoi; but he further said that although the General had not made any objection with regard to the force of the escort, he himself must still maintain that so large a one was unnecessary, and that it would be dangerous at Sarakhs and its neighbourhood, where there were now so many Turkomans, amongst whom the great force of the escort might give rise to suspicions, however unfounded, of evil intentions.

M. de Giers expressed his regret that General Zelenoi would not be able to meet his British colleague till January next, but begged me to assure your Lordship that he was, equally with himself, most anxious that the labour of the Commission should be successful.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 114.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 22, 1·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October 22, 1884.*

I HAVE informed the Persian Government that the Afghan Boundary Commission will meet at New Sarakhs, where British Commissioners will shortly arrive, and may remain for some time before beginning operations. The Governor-General of Khorassan has been informed accordingly, and has been directed to arrange with Sir P. Lumsden as to supplies.

No. 115.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—'Received by telegraph, October 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 22, 1884.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 18th instant, I have the honour to state that M. de Giers declares positively that it will be materially

impossible for General Zelenoi, the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Afghan boundary, to meet Sir Peter Lumsden at Sarakhs before January next.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 116.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October 24, 1884.*

IN conversation with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon, I took an opportunity of observing that I entirely concurred in the opinion publicly expressed by Lord Dufferin as to M. de Giers' character and friendly disposition.

I mentioned, however, the delays which were at present occurring, and the difficulties which were made in regard to the date and place of meeting of the Afghan Boundary Commission, and which I thought were very unfortunate. These difficulties were almost certain to be considered by the Government of India as being purposely created by the Russian Government, with the object of postponing the operations of the Commission until the Russian authorities on the spot had had time to arrange matters in the manner they thought most favourable to their views, and Lord Dufferin, who was leaving England with the best dispositions for promoting a friendly settlement, would have little or nothing to say to remove such an impression.

M. de Staal assured me that the delay in the arrival of the Russian Commissioner was unintentional and unavoidable, being due to General Zelenoi's illness.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 117.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, October 22, 1884.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 18th instant, I have the honour to state that, in the absence of M. de Giers, who is still at Gatchina, I called upon M. Zinovieff at the Russian Foreign Office, and urged in the strongest manner that General Zelenoi's preparations should be hastened, and that he should join Sir P. Lumsden on the 7th of next month; I used the arguments with which your Lordship had furnished me in the above-mentioned telegram, but whilst M. Zinovieff admitted that it had been agreed by the Imperial Government that the Commission should meet at that time at Sarakhs, he said that it was absolutely impossible that General Zelenoi could make all the necessary preparations, so as to be there at that time. I pointed out to him all the inconveniences and dangers of delay, and urged that the difficulties on our side had been much greater owing to the distances of the points of departure for the escort and Her Majesty's Commissioner, than any to which the Imperial Government could be exposed, seeing that the latter had abundance of troops in the immediate neighbourhood of the place of meeting, and that the journey from hence to Sarakhs was much easier than the one just undertaken by Sir P. Lumsden; but M. Zinovieff insisted that General Zelenoi, having been detained by illness, was unable to make his preparations in time for him to reach Sarakhs before January.

I requested him to convey what I had said to M. de Giers, which he promised immediately to do. In reply to these communications, I yesterday received the Memorandum, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, in which it is repeated that General Zelenoi cannot join Sir P. Lumsden before the 15th (27th) January next.

It adds that Her Majesty's Government having determined to increase the British escort to 400 men the force of the Russian escort will be the same.

It acquiesces in Sarakhs being the place of meeting, but expresses the opinion that it will be inexpedient that the English escort should traverse the territory occupied by the Salor Turkomans on the right bank of the "Heri-Rud (Tedjen)."

The Memorandum also urges that the duties of the Commissioners with regard to the demarcation of the frontier should be laid down with precision, and that the

extent of the zone which should be the object of their investigations should b defined.

M. de Giers will this afternoon, or to-morrow, transfer his residence from Gatchina to St. Petersburgh, when he will be more easily accessible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 117.

Memorandum.

AYANT pris connaissance du contenu du Mémorandum en date du 30 Septembre (12 Octobre), qui lui a été remis par M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères se fait un devoir de communiquer à son Excellence ses conclusions au sujet des points exposés dans ce document.

Malgré le vif désir dont est animé le Cabinet Impérial de hâter la solution de la question qui fait l'objet des négociations entre les deux Gouvernements, il a été constaté que les préparatifs qu'exige l'organisation de la section Russe de la Commission de Délimitation ne sauraient dans aucun cas être terminés avant le mois de Décembre, et M. le Général Zelenoi se verra par conséquent dans l'impossibilité de rejoindre son collègue Britannique avant le 15 Janvier (v.s.). Pour ce qui est des motifs de ce retard, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères ne peut que se référer à son Mémorandum du 19 Septembre dernier.

Les observations du Ministère Impérial quant à la force numérique des escortes dont seront munis les Commissaires Délimitateurs n'avaient été motivées que par la crainte des difficultés que ne manqueraient pas d'éprouver dans des contrées désertes le mouvement et le ravitaillement de corps tant soit peu considérables. Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ayant jugé nécessaire de porter l'escorte Anglaise à 400 hommes, des dispositions ont été prises pour que l'escorte Russe soit portée au même chiffre.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique s'étant trouvé dans l'impossibilité d'accéder à la proposition du Cabinet Impérial quant au choix de la localité où les Commissaires respectifs devront se rencontrer, le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères ne voit pas d'inconvénient à inviter le Commissaire Russe à se rendre à Sarakhs. Le Ministère n'en croit pas moins de son devoir d'insister sur les considérations contenues dans son Mémorandum du 19 Septembre quant aux inconvénients qu'offriraient le passage de l'escorte Anglaise par les localités de la rive droite du Heri-Rud (Tedjen) occupées par les Turkomans Salors, inconvénients qui ne manqueraient pas de neutraliser l'effet des dispositions prises par les autorités Russes dans le but d'assurer la tranquillité dans les Steppes.

Le Mémorandum en date du 30 Septembre (12 Octobre) ne contenant aucune information sur ce que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique a cru devoir décider au sujet des travaux de levé et de description, que la Commission aura a exécuter, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Etrangères croit de son devoir d'appeler de nouveau l'attention de M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre sur la nécessité de préciser d'avance les devoirs des Commissaires Délimitateurs à cet égard et de définir l'étendue de la zone qui fera l'objet de leurs investigations. Vu la nature des contrées que la Commission aura a visiter, il est à prevoir que ce n'est qu'à cette condition que les deux Gouvernements réussiront à prévenir les divergences d'opinions qui, en cas contraire, ne tarderaient pas à surgir entre les Commissaires et qui auraient pour résultat inévitable de retarder indéfiniment la marche de leurs travaux. L'entente préalable sur la zone à étudier ne préjugerait en rien la direction finale du tracé à convenir, mais elle circonscrirait la discussion des points à fixer dans des limites pratiques qui seules peuvent la faire aboutir à une issue satisfaisante.

St. Pétersbourg, le 9 Octobre, 1884.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs, after consideration of the contents of the Memorandum dated the 30th September (12th October), delivered to them by Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, have to inform his Excellency of their opinions on the points stated in the above document.

Notwithstanding the lively desire of the Imperial Cabinet to hasten the settlement

of the question under negotiation between the two Governments, it has been ascertained that the preparations required for the organization of the Russian section of the Boundary Commission could in no case be completed before the month of December, and General Zelenoi will accordingly find it impossible to rejoin his British colleague before the 15th January (v.s.). For the reasons of this delay the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can only refer to their Memorandum of the 19th September last.

The remarks of the Imperial Ministry with reference to the numerical strength of the escorts with which the Boundary Commissioners are to be furnished had no other motive than the fear of the difficulties which the movements and victualling of bodies, however small, must necessarily experience in desert countries. Her Britannic Majesty's Government having judged it necessary that 400 men should comprise the English escort, measures have been taken to make the Russian escort of the same size.

Since Her Britannic Majesty's Government find it impossible to accede to the proposition of the Imperial Cabinet as to the choice of the locality where the respective Commissioners are to meet, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs sees no inconvenience in inviting the Russian Commissioner to proceed to Sarakhs. The Ministry none the less considers it its duty to repeat the considerations contained in its Memorandum of the 19th September, as to the inconveniences which the passage of the English escort would encounter on the right bank of the Heri-Rud (Tedjend), occupied by the Salor Turkomans—inconveniences which could not fail to neutralize the effect of the measures taken by the Russian authorities to insure tranquillity in the Steppes.

Since the Memorandum dated the 30th September (12th October) contains no information respecting the decision of Her Britannic Majesty's Government on the subject of the work of survey which the Commission has to carry out, the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs considers it its duty to again call the attention of the English Ambassador to the necessity of previously defining the duties of the Boundary Commissioners with reference to this subject, and to settle on the area of the zone which is to be the object of their investigations. In view of the nature of the countries which the Commission has to visit, it is to be assumed that only in this manner will the two Governments succeed in preventing the differences of opinion which will speedily arise, if this be not done, between the Commissioners, and which will inevitably result in indefinitely retarding the progress of their work. A previous understanding about the zone for consideration will in no way prejudice the final direction of the line to be agreed upon, but will confine the discussion of points to be fixed within the practical limits which can alone lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

St. Petersburgh, October 9, 1884.

No. 117*.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received at the Foreign Office, October* 28.)

(Telegraphic.) *October* 28, 1884.

AFGHAN Boundary Commission. Ridgeway's party had reached Khwaja Ali on Helmund, 226 miles from Nushki by 16th. Health good. March has hitherto been very successfully managed.

Ameer has given satisfactory assurances regarding further advance.

No. 118.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received October* 30, 10·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, October* 30, 1884.

I LEARN that a convoy of camels lately sent from Merv has returned from Chehar Joo with 2,000 Russian infantry and cavalry who were halted on road to Yuletan, camels being then sent back to the Oxus. A Russian force of 800 men has also gone to Pul-i-Khatun.

No. 119.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, October* 30, 1884, 6·15 P.M.

I HAVE received your despatches of the 14th, 16th, and 22nd instant, and your telegram of 22nd.

Express to M. de Giers the great disappointment of Her Majesty's Government at postponement of General Zelenoi's departure, which will delay the work of the Commission until the spring.

No. 120.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received November 2, 10·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Meshed, October* 31, 1884.

I ARRIVED at Meshed to-day, and was received with every honour by the Governor-General of Khorassan. I hope to reach Sarakhs on the 8th. It is rumoured that two regiments of infantry from Charjui, with strong force of cavalry, have been concentrated in Yuletan. Cossacks have advanced to Pul-i-Khatun on the Heri-Rud, and to Pul-i-Khisti on the Murghab, 8 miles to the north of Panjdeh.

No. 121.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 4.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 1, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the following telegram, dated Tashkent, the 18th (30th) October, is published in the Russian press of the 19th (31st) October:—

"The 17th Battalion of the Line, ordered from Petro-Alexandrovsk to Merv, started from Chardjui (on the Oxus) for its destination across the Turkestan steppe. This is the first movement of Russian troops along the principal military and commercial road between Merv and Bokhara."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 122.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 4, 1884.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon and made to me the following statement in regard to the Afghan Frontier Commission.

The Russian Government, his Excellency said, being desirous of complying with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, had abandoned their objections as regards the numerical strength of the escorts which were to accompany the Commissioners, on account of the inconvenience to which their assemblage at Sarakhs would give rise. They had confined themselves to maintaining their reservations as to the impossibility of allowing the British escort to pass through the encampments of the Salor Turkomans established on the right bank of the Heri-Rud (Tedjend).

Her Majesty's Government did not, however, appear to give the Russian Government full credit for their friendly disposition, and without taking sufficiently into consideration the circumstances which render it quite impossible for the Russian Commissioner to meet his British colleague at the date previously agreed upon, your Excellency had insisted that the work of delimitation should be commenced before winter set in. You had even given it to be understood that the postponement of these operations might lead to a failure of the negotiations.

On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government had not yet replied to the observations of that of Russia as to the necessity of a preliminary understanding on the extent of the zone which was to be surveyed and described by the Commission. This

understanding appeared to the Russian Government to be essential to secure the success of the negotiations, and they could not anticipate any useful result from the Commission unless Her Majesty's Government furnished their Commissioner with precise instructions as to the limits of the territory to be examined. Those limits would in no way prejudge the final definition of the line of demarcation, which would depend on a subsequent agreement.

The Russian Government, M. de Staal added, attached special importance to this point, and considered it as the condition most material to the success of the negotiations.

As to the actual delimitation of the frontier, his Excellency observed that the position of the Russian Government was not in all respects identical with that of Great Britain. On Russia would devolve the direct duty of establishing and maintaining order and tranquillity in the countries which came within the sphere of her influence, while the task undertaken by England was the definition of the frontier of Afghanistan, which, while it was under the influence of Great Britain, did not form an integral portion of British territory.

The Russian Government trusted, his Excellency said, that Her Majesty's Government would prevent any isolated action on the part of the English Commissioner. If this were not the case, the Russian Government would be obliged to take, on their part, the measures they might consider necessary for the protection of their position in those countries.

M. de Staal, after making this communication, explained that he understood the object of his Government to be that the two Governments should agree upon the zone within which the Commission should limit their operations, not in order to bind the Commissioners to any particular line, as they would be at liberty to discuss freely within such limits, but to prevent their recommending a line which could not be acceptable to either party.

A further object of the Russian Government was that the instructions to the Commissioners should be so framed as to insure their sending home surveys which would enable the two Governments to understand their recommendations or any differences which might arise during their discussions.

M. de Staal begged that he might have an early reply to his communication.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 123.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(*Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, November* 10.)

(Télégraphique.) *St. Pétersbourg, le* 28 *Octobre* (9 *Novembre*), 1884.

NOUS voyons avec plaisir que Lord Kimberley reconnaît le bien-fondé de notre demande, mais nous ne pouvons partager son avis relativement au mode de procéder. Les divergences de vue entre les Commissaires ne sauraient être prévenues que par une définition préalable de la zone d'investigation qui devra précéder le commencement des travaux. Une entente entre les Commissaires à ce sujet ne pourrait par conséquent avoir lieu que sur les bases d'informations antérieures figurant sur les cartes. Les deux Cabinets possèdent ces données et un échange de vues à ce sujet nous paraît d'autant plus possible qu'il n'est pas question d'une définition mathématique de la zone mais d'en indiquer les limites en traits généraux.

Si ce mode était adopté les Commissaires pourraient procéder aux travaux aussitôt qu'ils se seraient réunis tandis que, au cas contraire, le commencement des travaux subirait d'incalculables retards.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, October* 28 (*November* 9), 1884.

WE see with pleasure that Lord Kimberley recognizes the justice of our demand, but we cannot share his opinion as to the method of procedure. Differences between the Commissioners can be avoided only by a preliminary definition of the zone of investigation before the commencement of the work. An understanding on this subject between the Commissioners could therefore only be arrived at on the bases of the information to be derived from existing maps. The two Cabinets are in possession of such information, and an exchange of views appears to us the more possible that it

is a question, not of a mathematical definition, but of a general indication of the boundaries of the zone.

If this method were adopted, the Commissioners would be able to set to work as soon as they met, whilst, in the other case, the beginning of the work would be subject to incalculable delay.

No. 124.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 10, 1884.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a telegram from M. de Giers on the subject of the Afghan boundary, which was communicated to me by the Russian Ambassador to-day.*

M. de Giers states that the only manner in which differences of opinion between the Commissioners can be avoided is that the two Governments should agree beforehand upon a zone within which the boundary should be laid down, and that this plan would be all the more possible, since there would be no question of a precise definition of such zone, and that it would be only necessary to indicate its limits in general terms.

M. de Giers adds that if this mode of procedure were adopted, the Commissioners might commence work as soon as they met, but that otherwise much delay might ensue.

I informed M. de Staal that the point was one on which Her Majesty's Government entertained a strong opinion, and I mentioned the necessity which exists for consultation between the British Commissioner and the Afghan official deputed by the Ameer to furnish information.

I pointed out to his Excellency that the Secretary of State for India was most anxious to meet the views of the Russian Government whenever it was found possible to do so, in proof of which I instanced the new instructions sent to Sir Peter Lumsden with regard to the British escort, a copy of which I am about to forward to your Excellency.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 125.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 12, 1884.

HER Majesty's Government have had before them your despatches of the 14th, 16th, and 22nd ultimo, relating to the Afghan boundary. They have carefully considered the questions raised by General Zelenoi and M. Zenovieff in their conversation with your Excellency, and in M. de Giers' Memorandum of the 9th (21st) ultimo, together with the representations made to me by the Russian Ambassador on the 4th instant, as recorded in my despatch to your Excellency of that date.

The language held by your Excellency on the subject of the delay in General Zelenoi's departure is entirely approved by Her Majesty's Government; and they can only express their great disappointment at the unsuccessful result of their exertions to secure the meeting of the Commission in good time for the working season.

It is to be regretted that an undertaking, the advantage of which has been recognized by both Governments for many months past, must now be postponed until next spring, the climate being such as to render work impossible between December and March.

The Russian Government have expressed their great anxiety to arrive at a preliminary understanding with Her Majesty's Government as to the limits of a zone within which the boundary-line should run, and outside of which the Commission should not be allowed to extend their explorations. Her Majesty's Government agree to the desirability of a zone being settled, the limits of which should not be passed in the laying down of a boundary-line, but they continue to be of opinion that it is for

* No. 123.

the Commissioners alone to decide what shall be the region of their inquiry. The British Commissioner will be in communication with an Afghan official sent by the Ameer to furnish information, and it would be very inconvenient not to consult this officer before fixing the zone for the operations of the Commission.

Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to acquiesce in any arrangement of the nature desired by the Russian Government which may be mutually agreed upon by the Commissioners when they meet, and they will address special instructions to the British Commissioner in this sense.

In regard to the fears expressed to you Excellency by General Zelenoi as to the possible attitude of the Ameer of Afghanistan, Her Majesty's Government have no reason to anticipate that his Highness will throw any obstacles in the way of the Commissioners making their inquiries at such points in Afghanistan as they may agree to be necessary for the execution of the duties entrusted to them.

The Russian Government have called the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the inconvenience which may arise from the passage of the British escort through the encampments of the Salor Turkomans, and have pointed out the necessity of preventing any isolated action on the part of the English Commissioner. Her Majesty's Government have the fullest confidence in Sir P. Lumsden's discretion, but, in order to meet the wishes of the Russian Government, he has been instructed to be extremely cautious as to his movements and action during the absence of his Russian colleague. Her Majesty's Government trust that the same instructions will be issued by the Russian Government to their local authorities in the Transcaspian districts. They propose further to instruct Sir Peter Lumsden to halt the main body of his escort at some convenient place in Afghanistan, far enough off not to excite alarm on the frontier, and to come to an agreement with General Zelenoi as to the numbers which should accompany the Commissioners when they move about for the purpose of conducting their operations.

Her Majesty's Government entirely agree with the views expressed by M. de Staal that the Commissioners should send home surveys, which will enable the two Governments to understand their recommendations, or any differences which may arise during their discussions, and it is with that object that survey officers have been attached by the Government of India to Sir P. Lumsden's party.

I have to request your Excellency to address a note to M. de Giers in the sense of this despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 126.

Earl Granville to Major-General Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 12, 1884.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith copies of recent correspondence which has taken place with Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh relative to the Afghan boundary.*

Sir E. Thornton has been informed by M. de Giers that it will be impossible for the Russian Commissioner, General Zelenoi, to be at Sarakhs before January next, and Her Majesty's Government have expressed their great disappointment at the unsuccessful result of their exertions to secure the meeting of the Commission in good time for the working season.

You will observe that the Russian Government have expressed their great anxiety to arrive at a preliminary understanding with Her Majesty's Government as to the limits of a zone within which the boundary-line should run, and outside of which the Commission should not be allowed to extend their explorations.

Her Majesty's Government agree to the desirability of a zone being settled, the limits of which should not be passed in the laying down of a boundary-line; but they continue to be of opinion that it is for the Commissioners alone to decide what should be the region of their inquiry. They have informed the Russian Government that you will be in communication with an Afghan official sent by the Ameer to furnish information, and that it would be very inconvenient not to consult this officer before fixing the zone for the operations of the Commission.

* Nos. 112, 113, 117, 122 and 125.

You will, however, discuss the matter with General Zelenoi as soon as you have been joined by that officer, and will report the result to Her Majesty's Government, who will be prepared to acquiesce in any arrangement of the nature desired by the Russian Government, which may be agreed upon by the Commissioners.

The Russian Government have called the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the inconvenience which may arise from the passage of the British escort through the encampments of the Salor Turkomans, and have pointed out the necessity of preventing any isolated action on your part.

Her Majesty's Government have the fullest confidence in your discretion, but they think it desirable to impress upon you the importance of exercising extreme caution both as regards your movements and action during the absence of your Russian colleague.

With this object, you should halt the main body of your escort at some convenient place in Afghanistan, far enough off not to excite alarm on the frontier; and on General Zelenoi's arrival you should come to an agreement with him as to the numbers which should accompany you when moving about for the purpose of conducting your operations.

You will be careful to send home surveys with your Reports, which will enable Her Majesty's Government to understand your recommendations, or any differences of opinion which may arise during your discussions with General Zelenoi.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 127.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received November 15, 5·5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Sarakhs, November* 9, 1884.

I ARRIVED here yesterday. Weather very fine, and no reason why work of the Commission should not have been proceeded with. Afghan officer with 100 horsemen joined me here, corroborating report that Cossacks had been pushed forward and apparently permanently located on right bank of the Heri-Rud opposite Pul-i-Khatum, and he further informed me that Russians had been stopped by Afghans attempting to clean out springs on Badkis road to Herat. Governor of Akhal, who has been at Old Sarakhs for three days with Colonel Alikhanoff, made arrangements to leave for Merv this morning without meeting me. I sent Mr. Stephen to inquire whether these troops had advanced 40 miles beyond Sarakhs by the Emperor's orders, and to point out possible conflict with Afghans by infringement of Agreement of 1873, and probable grave results. General Komaroff replied that Prince Dondoukoff had ordered the advance of the Cossacks to Pul-i-Khatun as an outpost, but denied that Russians had visited other portions of Badkis, though admitting that a surveying party had been sent to Yulatan with instructions not to go further than Kushk.

No. 128.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received November 14, 12·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Sarakhs, November* 10, 1884.

GENERAL KOMAROFF left to-day. Colonel Alikhanoff, by his direction, called with reference to my representation yesterday, and asked on what grounds the Afghans, who heretofore had always had their outpost in Penjdeh, had some twenty days ago moved forward sixty horsemen 24 miles to Sari Yazi. I replied that I knew of no such movement, but should inquire regarding it as soon as possible; that, however, in any case the two movements were different, as by going to Pul-i-Khatun the Russians had overstepped the line of demarcation from Khoja Saleh to neighbourhood of Sarakhs, whereas the Ameer was within that line. He said that the movement to Pul-i-Khatun was simply precautionary, owing to rumours of the concentration of Afghan troops at Ghorian, and effect produced by the advance of the British force. I said it was very undesirable that this sort of excitement should be created, as it was the desire of both Governments to avoid friction; but that the aggressive action of Russia in sending officers and emissaries into Afghanistan had caused it; but that I had no doubt that when one party was withdrawn the other would be also. After long

conversation he informed me that the boundary between Yulatan and Penjdeh was at Sari Yazi, on the Murghab.

There is some excitement among the Turkomans in consequence of the delay.

No. 129.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 14, 2·35 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Sarakhs, November* 10, 1884.

THE Governor of Herat reports that, owing to advance of Russian troops to some 30 miles from Yulatan, he strengthened Penjdeh by two guns and a wing of infantry. I shall at once impress him with importance of making no further movements.

No. 130.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 14, 2·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 14, 1884, 12·50 P.M.

COLONEL RIDGEWAY'S party arrived on the 9th instant at Kuhsan.

No. 131.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 14, 1884, 7·10 P.M.

RUSSIAN Government press for preliminary understanding with Her Majesty's Government as to limits of a zone within which the boundary should run, and which shall not be crossed by the Commission. I have replied that the Commissioners alone can decide what should be region of their inquiry, that you must consult Afghan official beforehand, and then discuss the matter with General Zelenoi. We shall acquiesce in any arrangement agreed on by Commissioners. In order to obviate inconvenience which they anticipate from passage of escort through encampment of Salor Turkomans, you should exercise extreme caution in your movements until General Zelenoi's arrival, halting main body of your escort far enough off in Afghanistan not to excite alarm on frontier. You should also come to an agreement with him as to numbers of escort to accompany you when moving about.

General Zelenoi will not reach you till January.

No. 132.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 20, 1884.

I HAVE already communicated to you the telegram from Her Majesty's Commissioner on the Afghan Boundary Commission, dated Sarakhs, November 9, relative to the advance of the Russian troops from that place, and the increased difficulties in the way of an amicable settlement likely to arise therefrom.

Her Majesty's Government desire that your Excellency will represent to the Russian Government the embarrassment likely to arise from the presence of Russian troops at Pul-i-Khatun, and press strongly for their withdrawal to Sarakhs, in which case steps will also be taken to obtain the retirement to Penjdeh of the Afghan detachment said to have been advanced to Sari-Azi.

Your Excellency will further inform M. de Giers that unless the Russian frontier authorities abstain from forward movements pending the commencement of the work of the Commission, which has been so unfortunately delayed, it will be difficult to restrain the Ameer of Afghanistan and his officials from taking steps which will seem to them to be necessary, in order to safeguard Afghan rights; but that Sir Peter Lumsden has impressed

upon the Governor of Herat the necessity of no further movements of troops taking place under present circumstances.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 133.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 20, 1884, 4·35 P.M.

YOUR communication to the Governor of Herat reported on the 10th instant is approved by Her Majesty's Government.

No. 134.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received November 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Kasan, November* 21, 1884.

I HAVE received a very friendly letter from the Ameer. I proceed to Penjdeh whilst the camp moves by Kushk and Bala Murghab to Chakar Shamba, 30 miles from Maimeneh, on Herat road, where I shall establish winter quarters, arrangements having been made with Afghan authorities to at once construct kibitkas for men and horses.

No. 135.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, November 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 27, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I last night received from M. de Giers a note in which was conveyed, for the acceptance of Her Majesty's Government, a proposal to agree to a zone for the operations of the Commission for the north-western boundary of Afghanistan, the limits of which should be as follows:—

For the northern limit, a line drawn from a point on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, opposite Dowletabad, straight to the River Murghab, above Imam Baksh, and thence to Khodja Saleh.

For the southern limit, a line also drawn from the right bank of the Heri-Rud, which would follow the natural line of the chain of mountains which incloses the valley of Herat to the north towards the sources of the River Kushk, whose course it would descend to Chihil Doukhtar. From this point the line would run along the confines of the encampments of the Djemchidis and Firouz Kouhis to the Afghan fort of Bala Murghab, whence it would follow the course of the Kaïsar and of the Sangalak and the confines of the Andkoi district, to end at Khodja Saleh.

The Heri-Rud would be the western limit of the zone.

I am forwarding by to-day's post a copy of M. de Giers' note and of its inclosure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 136.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 28, 1884, 3·20 P.M.

FOLLOWING telegram has been received from Sir E. Thornton, dated yesterday:—

[Substance of No. 135.]

No. 137.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received November* 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 26, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Novoe Vremya" of the 25th instant, the Minister of War, on the representation of General Komaroff, Chief of the Transcaspian region, has decided to commence the construction of a line of telegraph from Askhabad (to which place telegraph communication already exists) viâ Annau, Babadurma, Bugachik, Archingan, Sarakhs to Merv. The cost of the construction of this line of telegraph will amount to about 100,000 roubles.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 138.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 1.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, November* 27, 1884.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's despatch of the 12th instant, I addressed a note to M. de Giers, dated the 17th instant, on the subject of the Afghan Boundary Commission, and acquainting him with the substance of that despatch.

On the 19th instant I called upon his Excellency, and he then told me that he had had my note under consideration, and had laid it before the Emperor. He added that as both His Majesty and himself thought it of paramount importance that no time should be lost in coming to an agreement between the two Governments as to the limits of the territory within which the operations of the Commission should be confined, he had suggested to His Imperial Majesty, and the latter had favourably received the suggestion, either that the Russian Government should propose to Her Majesty's Government a certain zone for this purpose, or, if it were found impossible to do this, or if Her Majesty's Government should decline to accept such a proposal, that a Russian officer of high rank, perhaps General Komaroff, should be instructed to call upon Sir Peter Lumsden to confer with him, and to endeavour to come to an agreement with him as to the extent and limits of this zone.

M. de Giers added that by order of the Emperor he was about to consult with the Minister of War, and hoped to be able shortly to address me a note in this sense.

In compliance with the instruction contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 20th instant, I had another interview with M. de Giers on the 21st instant, when I urged in the strongest terms the withdrawal to Sarakhs of the Russian troops which had been sent to Pul-i-Khatun, and that the frontier authorities would abstain from forward movements pending the commencement of the work of the Commission.

M. de Giers replied that the troops at Pul-i-Khatun were merely a very small advanced post, consisting of a few Cossacks who had been sent there for the protection of the Salor Turkomans who had now returned to those parts to cultivate the land which really belonged to them, and had appealed to the Russian authorities for protection. He said that the detachment of Cossacks which was at Old Sarakhs had been sent there some time ago, not with any idea of encroaching upon or claiming territory, but of protecting the Turkomans rather against the Persian authorities, who wished to drive them off, than against any one else, and because it was in the interests of civilization and the general safety of those regions that the Turkomans should be protected in peaceable pursuits, rather than be compelled to have recourse to their former predatory habits.

On the other hand, his Excellency assured me that the Imperial Government had received authentic information that 4,000 Afghans had advanced along the Murghab north of Penjdeh, and that it was in consequence of the excitement caused by this movement that General Komaroff had paid a visit of inspection to Old Sarakhs, and with a view to calming the fears which had been caused by it.

I replied that I had received no information of this advance, and that even if it had taken place, the number of men must be greatly exaggerated, for I was convinced that such a number of Afghan troops were neither at Penjdeh nor its neighbourhood. I added, however, that if the Russian troops were withdrawn from Pul-i-Khatun, Her Majesty's Government would take measures to prevent any advanced movements being made by Afghan forces.

M. de Giers replied that he would speak to the Minister of War on the subject, but

that the post at that place was insignificant in number, and was only intended to give confidence to the Turkomans in the peaceable cultivation of their lands.

But the general tone of M. de Giers' observations left upon me the impression that in proposing a zone to Her Majesty's Government, the Russian Government intended to fix its northern limit to the south of Pul-i-Khatun, and I therefore pointed out to his Excellency that in the numberless conversations we had had upon the subject, we had always spoken of Sarakhs as the point of departure from the Tedjend, and that it would certainly be very extraordinary if the country opposite Sarakhs were not included in the territory to be submitted to the investigation of the Commission. M. de Giers replied that at that time he had not been so well acquainted with the localities; but that at any rate the zone proposed would be as extensive as possible. His Excellency then said that I should receive his note either that evening or the next day.

I yesterday saw his Excellency again, when he informed me that in the note, which would be forwarded to me at once, a zone had been proposed,* within which he trusted that the boundary could be laid down; and it was only last night that I received the note, of which, as well as of its inclosure, I have the honour to transmit a copy herewith.

Your Lordship will perceive that the zone proposed does not include the country opposite Sarakhs, but that its northern limit would start from a point to the north of Shir Tépé.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 138.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 14 (26) *Novembre*, 1884.

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'adresser en date du 5 (17) courant, et qui contient un exposé des vues du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique relativement aux questions qui ont fait l'objet de votre entretien avec MM. Zinoview et Zelenoi, ainsi que du Mémorandum du Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères du 9 (21) Octobre, et au sujet desquelles l'Ambassadeur de l'Empereur à Londres a été également chargé de s'expliquer avec M. le Comte de Granville.

Le Cabinet Impérial s'est fait un devoir d'examiner avec la plus scrupuleuse attention les considérations contenues dans la susdite note.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique vous a chargé, M. l'Ambassadeur, d'exprimer au Cabinet Impérial les regrets que lui fait éprouver le retard inattendu qu'a subi la rencontre des Commissaires respectifs.

Le Ministère Impérial s'étant déjà fait un devoir de vous exposer avec une entière franchise les motifs de ce retard, je crois pouvoir me borner à y ajouter que, suivant les dernières informations reçues des autorités de la province Transcaspienne, les conditions climatériques s'opposent dès à présent au commencement des travaux aux environs de Sarakhs, où la température descend pendant la nuit jusqu'à 14 degrés Réaumur au-dessous du zéro.

Je ne saurais en outre m'abstenir de vous faire observer qu'en dehors des circonstances imprévues qui ont empêché la rencontre des Commissaires à l'époque convenu, il y en a d'autres qui sont également de nature à entraver la marche des négociations et que le Cabinet Impérial ne pourrait écarter qu'avec le concours du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique. Ces circonstances, comme vous le savez déjà, M. l'Ambassadeur, se rattachent à la divergence de vues qui s'est produite entre les deux Gouvernements quant au mode de fixation des limites de la zone qui doit faire l'objet des investigations des Commissaires respectifs.

Persuadé qu'une entente directe à ce sujet entre les deux Gouvernements serait le moyen le plus pratique pour prévenir les contestations éventuelles entre les Commissaires, c'est déjà à la date du 19 Septembre dernier que le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères s'est fait un devoir d'attirer votre attention sur cette grave question et de réclamer votre intervention auprès du Gouvernement Britannique dans le but d'en activer la solution. Or, ce n'est que depuis la recéption de votre note du 5 (17) courant que le Ministère s'est trouvé en mesure d'apprécier les conclusions du Cabinet de Londres. Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, ainsi qu'il résulte de la susdite note, reconnaît de son côté l'utilite d'une entente sur lazone, mais en même temps il est d'avis que c'est aux Commissaires respectifs qu'il appartiendrait d'en fixer les limites et que le Commissaire Britannique serait

* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 5.

en outre tenu de consulter préalablement à ce sujet le fonctionnaire Afghan qui a été désigné par l'Emir Abdourrahman Khan pour lui fournir des informations.

Le Commissaire Russe n'ayant point à intervenir dans les rapports du Général Lumsden avec les autorités Afghanes, le Cabinet Impérial ne pense pas non plus que la nécessité de consulter préalablement le Délégué d'Abdourrahman Khan puisse servir d'obstacle à l'adoption de la proposition exposée dans les Mémorandums du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères du 19 Septembre et du 9 Octobre. La note de votre Excellence du 5 (17) courant ne contenant en outre aucune autre objection de nature à expliquer les inconvénients qui pourraient résulter de l'application de ce mode de solution, je me fais un devoir d'appeler encore une fois l'attention la plus sérieuse de votre Excellence sur les considérations qui portent le Gouvernement Impérial à penser qu'une entente préalable et immédiate entre les Cabinets serait de la plus haute importance pour assurer le succès des négociations, et qu'en cas contraire les Commissaires risqueraient de se heurter à des difficultés inextricables.

Ces considérations sont les suivantes :—

La définition préalable d'une zone d'investigations ne saurait préjuger la direction de la ligne-frontière dont le tracé devra faire l'objet d'une entente ultérieure soit entre les Commissaires, soit entre les deux Cabinets, dans le cas où les Commissaires ne parviendraient pas à tomber d'accord à ce sujet. Elle ne saurait en conséquence porter la moindre atteinte aux intérêts légitimes des parties en cause.

La définition de la zone est nécessaire pour prévenir des contestations éventuelles entre les Commissaires au sujet de l'étendue du territoire qu'ils seront tenus d'étudier, afin d'être en mesure de fournir à leurs Gouvernements respectifs des données aussi complètes que possible sur les conditions géographiques et ethnographiques de ce territoire dans son ensemble, et qui pourraient servir de base solide au tracé d'une ligne de démarcation répondant aux intérêts des parties en cause, ainsi qu'à l'établissement d'un ordre de choses stable.

Une entente sur les limites de la zone devant précéder le commencement des travaux, ces limites ne sauraient être désignés que sur la base de données recueillies précédemment et qui figurent déjà sur les cartes existantes. Les imperfections et les erreurs qu'offrent ces cartes ne pourraient dans aucun cas servir d'obstacle à une entente entre les deux Cabinets, attendu qu'il serait tout à fait superflu de rechercher une définition mathématique de la zone et qu'il suffirait d'en préciser les limites en traits généraux.

Les Commissaires délimitateurs eux-mêmes, en cas où ils seraient autorisés à fixer d'un commun accord les limites de la zone, ne pourraient prendre pour base de leur travail que ces mêmes cartes, et le Gouvernement Impérial se croit en droit d'en conclure qu'il ne saurait y avoir d'obstacles à ce que les deux Cabinets procédassent dès à présent à un échange d'idées en vue de hâter la solution de cette importante question, afin que les Commissaires puissent commencer leurs investigations aussitôt après leur réunion à Sarakhs.

Tout autre mode de procéder ne manquerait pas d'exercer une influence défavorable sur la marche ultérieure des négociations. Les Commissaires délimitateurs, en cas où les divergences d'opinions se produraient entre eux sur les limites à assigner à la zone d'investigations, se trouveraient dans la nécessité d'en référer tout de même à leurs Gouvernements respectifs, et se condamner à l'inaction jusqu'au moment où le différend aura été réglé. Sans parler du retard qui en résulterait pour les travaux de délimitation—retard dont il est difficile de prévoir la durée—une telle situation ne serait non plus exempte d'autrés inconvénients, non moins graves, sur lesquels je crois tout à fait superflu de m'étendre, mais qui ne sauraient échapper à la perspicacité des deux Gouvernements.

Persuadé qu'il ne saurait être conforme aux intentions du Gouvernement Britannique de laisser les négociations s'engager dans une impasse et étant en même temps animé du désir de hâter autant que possible la solution des questions pendantes. le Cabinet Impérial a cru devoir profiter de la présence à St. Pétersbourg de son Commissaire pour le charger de la rédaction d'un projet de zone d'investigation sur la base de données existantes.

En vous transmettant ci-près une copie du travail du Général Zelenoi, je viens vous prier, M. l'Ambassadeur, de vouloir bien le soumettre à l'appréciation de votre Gouvernement.

En cas où le Cabinet de Sa Majesté la Reine jugerait nécessaire de lui faire parvenir ses observations sur les détails de ce travail, le Cabinet Impérial se fera un devoir de les examiner et de les discuter dans un esprit de conciliation. Mais se trouvant dans l'impossibilité d'exercer une action quelconque sur les dispositions des autorités Afghanes, il se plaît, d'autre part, à espérer que le Cabinet de Sa Majesté la Reine ne refusera pas de lui fournir des garanties qui permettraient au Commissaire Russe de pro-

céder conjointement avec son collègue Britannique aux investigations nécessaires, avec la certitude qu'aucun obstacle ne serait opposé à une étude consciencieuse de la zone dans les limites qui sont indiquées en traits généraux dans le travail du Général Zelenoi.

Veuillez, &c.

(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, November* 14 (26), 1884.

I HAVE received the note which your Excellency did me the honour of writing me on the 5th (17th) instant, which contains a statement of the views of Her Britannic Majesty's Government with reference to the questions which were the subject of your interview with Messrs Zinoview and Zelenoi, as also of the Memorandum of the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the 9th (21st) October, and which the Imperial Ambassador in London was also instructed to discuss with Earl Granville.

The Imperial Cabinet have examined with the most scrupulous attention the considerations contained in the above-mentioned note.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government have instructed you, M. l'Ambassadeur, to express to the Imperial Cabinet their regret at the unexpected delay which the meeting of the respective Commissioners has met with.

As the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs has already laid before you most frankly the causes of this delay, I think I may content myself with adding that according to the latest information received from the authorities in the Trans-Caspian Province the state of the climate is for the present adverse to the beginning of the work in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs, where during the night the temperature goes down to 14 degrees Réaumur below zero.

I cannot, moreover, refrain from saying that besides the unforeseen circumstances which have prevented the meeting of the Commissioners at the date agreed upon, there exist others which may also interrupt the course of negotiations, and which the Imperial Government can only avoid with the assistance of Her Majesty's Government. These circumstances, as you are already aware, M. l'Ambassadeur, are connected with the difference of opinion which has arisen between the two Governments with reference to the mode of settling the limits of the zone which is to be the object of the investigations of the respective Commissioners.

Under the conviction that a definite understanding on this subject between the two Governments would be the most practical means of preventing future disputes between the Commissioners, on the 19th of last September the Department for Foreign Affairs had already considered it their duty to call your attention to this grave question, and to request your intervention with the British Government with the object of bringing about a solution. It was not, however, till after the receipt of your note of the 5th (17th) instant that the Department was in a position to estimate the decisions of the Cabinet of London. Her Majesty's Government, according to that note, recognize on their side the advantage of an understanding on the subject of the zone, but are at the same time of opinion that it would fall to the respective Commissioners to settle its limits, and that the British Commissioner would be further bound to previously consult on this subject the Afghan official who has been nominated by the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan to furnish him with information.

The Russian Commissioner not having any cause to interfere in General Lumsden's relations with the Afghan authorities, the Imperial Cabinet does not think either that the necessity of consulting previously Abdurrahman Khan's Representative should be an obstacle to the adoption of the proposal put forward in the Memoranda of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the 19th September and the 9th October. As, moreover, your Excellency's note of the 5th (17th) instant does not contain any other objection with a view of explaining the inconveniences which might result from the application of this means of solution, I consider it my duty to invite the most serious attention of your Excellency to the considerations which impel the Imperial Government to think that a previous and immediate understanding between the Cabinets would be of the highest importance to insure the success of the negotiations, and that in the contrary case the Commissioners would risk encountering inextricable difficulties.

These considerations are as follows:—

The previous definition of a zone of investigations would not prejudice the direction of the frontier-line, the tracing of which might be made the object of a later understanding, either among the Commissioners or between the two Cabinets in the event of the Commissioners not succeeding in agreeing on the subject.

It would, consequently, in no way injure the legitimate interests of the respective parties.

The definition of the zone is necessary to prevent future disputes between the Commissioners on the subject of the extent of the territory which they have to study, so as to be in a position to furnish their respective Governments with Reports as complete as possible on the geographical and ethnographical conditions of this territory throughout, which might serve as a solid basis for the tracing of a line of frontier which would meet the interests of the respective parties, as well as establish a settled state of affairs.

As an understanding on the limits of the zone ought to precede the beginning of the work, these limits should only be decided on the basis of information previously collected, which is already to be found in existing maps. The imperfections and errors which these maps contain need not in any case create an obstacle to an understanding between the two Cabinets, since it would be quite superfluous to look for a mathematical definition of the zone and it would be sufficient to indicate its limits in general terms.

The Boundary Commissioners themselves, in the event of their being authorized to fix the limits of the zone by common agreement, could only take these same maps as a basis to work upon, and the Imperial Government think they may conclude that there is no difficulty in the two Cabinets proceeding at once to an exchange of ideas with a view to hastening the settlement of this important question, so that the Commissioners may begin their investigations directly after their meeting at Sarakhs.

Every other method of proceeding must inevitably exercise an unfavourable influence on the course of subsequent negotiation. The Boundary Commissioners, in the event of differences of opinion arising between them as to the limits to be settled for the zone of operations, would still find it necessary to refer to their respective Governments, and would thus be condemned to idleness until the difference was settled. Without speaking of the delay which this would entail in the work of delimitation—a delay the duration of which it is difficult to foresee—such a situation would also not be free from other inconveniences not less serious, which I consider it quite superfluous to dwell upon, but which must be evident to the two Governments.

Convinced that the British Government do not intend to allow the negotiations to arrive at a deadlock, and being also animated by the wish to hasten as much as possible the solution of the pending questions, the Imperial Cabinet have thought it as well to profit by the presence of their Commissioner in St. Petersburgh to instruct him to draw out a project of a zone of operations on the basis of existing information.

I beg you, M. l'Ambassadeur, to submit to your Government the inclosed copy of a Memorandum by General Zelenoi.

In the event of Her Majesty's Government thinking it necessary to furnish them with their observations on the details of this Memorandum, the Imperial Cabinet will undertake to examine and discuss them in a conciliatory spirit. But as they would be unable to exercise any influence on the intentions of the Afghan authorities, they hope, on the other hand, that the Cabinet of Her Majesty the Queen will not refuse to furnish them with guarantees which would allow the Russian Commissioner to begin, in conjunction with his British colleague, the necessary investigations, with the conviction that no obstacle would be raised to a conscientious study of the zone within the limits which are indicated in general terms in General Zelenoi's Memorandum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 138.

Memorandum.

POUR assurer une base solide au tracé définitif d'une frontière stable, il est nécessaire de donner à la zone d'investigations une configuration telle que ses limites puissent autant que possible coïncider avec les limites géographiques du territoire qui fera l'objet des études des Commissaires. Pour satisfaire aux conditions ci-dessus exposées, la zone d'investigation doit embrasser toutes les localités comprises dans les limites géographiques et dont les conditions topographiques et ethnographiques sont peu ou point connues, et surtout celles où les populations Turcomanes se trouvent en contact avec les populations Afghanes.

Vu l'impossibilité de faire aboutir la limite septentrionale de la zone à des frontière naturelles, le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie pourrait admettre que la limite en question aboutisse aux localités où se sont arrêté les travaux de levé exécutés par ordre des autorités d la province Transcaspienne.

Conformément à ce point de vue la limite septentrionale de la zone partirait du point sis sur la rive droite du Heri-roud, vis-à-vis de Darnletabad, se dirigeant en ligne droite vers le Mourghab, qu'elle franchirait en amont d'Iman-bakhsch pour aboutir ensuite au fort Afghan Khodja-Saleh, sur l'Amou-Daria.

Le cours du Heri-roud formerait la limite occidentale de la zone d'investigation.

Quant à sa limite méridionale, elle partirait également de la rive droite du Heri-roud, suivrait la ligne naturelle de la chaîne de montagnes* qui ferme au nord la vallée de Hérat dans la direction des sources de la Rivière Kouschk, dont elle descendrait le cours jusqu'à Thikil-Doukhter. A partir de ce point la limite méridionale longerait les confins des établissements des Djemchidis et Firouz-Kouhis jusqu'au fort Afghan de Bala-Mourghab, d'où elle suivrait le cours du Kaïsar et du Sangalah, et les confins du district d'Andkir pour aboutir également à Khodja-Saleh.

En admettant même que quelques parties des territoires non contestés de l'un ou de l'autre État limitrophe seraient comprises dans la zone d'investigation, cette circonstance ne saurait porter la moindre atteinte aux droits des dits États, tandis que la description et le levé des parties de territoire en question profiteraient à la science.

Il serait nécessaire de hâter autant que possible une entente sur les limites de la zone afin que le Gouvernement Impérial puisse préciser le personnel et les moyens topographiques qu'il aura à mettre à la disposition de son Commissaire en vue des travaux de levé et de description que le Commissaire aura à faire exécuter.

(Translation.)

IN order to insure a solid basis for the definitive tracing of a settled frontier, it is necessary that the character of the zone of investigation should be such that its limits may, as far as possible, coincide with the geographical limits of the territory to be studied by the Commissioners. To fulfil these conditions the zone should include all the districts comprised within the geographical limits of the topographical and ethnographical conditions of which little or nothing is known, and especially those in which Turkoman populations are found in contact with Afghan populations.

In view of the impossibility of defining the northern limit of the zone by natural boundaries, the Imperial Russian Government would allow the line in question to be drawn up to the points at which the surveys executed by order of the authorities of the Trans-Caspian Province cease.

The northern boundary line of the zone would accordingly run from the point upon the right bank of the Heri-Rud, opposite Dauletabad, in a straight line to the Murghab, which it would cross above Imam Bakhsh, and would end at the Afghan fort of Khodja-Saleh, on the Amou-Daria.

The course of the Heri-Rud would form the western boundary of the zone of investigation.

As for its southern boundary, the line would also start from the right bank of the Heri-Rud, following the natural line of the mountain-chain* which closes on the north the Valley of Herat in the direction of the sources of the River Koushk, whose course it would descend as far as Thikil Doukhter. From this point the southern line would run along the borders of the Settlements of the Djemchidis and Firouz-Kouhis to the Afghan fort of Bala-Murghab, from thence along the course of the Kaïsar and the Sangalah, and the borders of the Andkir district, to terminating also at Khodja-Saleh.

It is true that some parts of the territory which is not disputed by either State would be comprised within the zone of investigation, but this would not in the slightest degree affect the rights of the said States, whilst science would benefit by the description and survey of such territory.

An understanding upon the boundaries of the zone should be, as much as possible,

* En 1875, à l'époque du voyage du Colonel MacGregor, cette même chaîne de montagnes formait aussi, suivant le témoignage de cet officier, la ligne des postes-frontières Afghans, lesquels cependant n'étaient pas occupés par des gardes frontières. (" Narrative of a Journey through the Province of Khorassan and of the North-west Frontier of Afghanistan in 1875, by Colonel MacGregor :" London, 1879, p. 241.)

(Translation.)—In 1875, at the date of Colonel MacGregor's journey, this same mountain-chain formed also, according to the testimony of that officer, the line of Afghan frontier-posts, which nevertheless were not occupied by frontier-guards. (" Narrative of a Journey through the Province of Khorassan and of the North-west Frontier of Afghanistan in 1875, by Colonel MacGregor:" London, 1879, p. 241.)

hastened, in order that the Imperial Government may be able to decide upon the men, and the topographical means which it will be necessary to place at the disposal of their Commissioner, in view of the work of surveying, and of description to be undertaken by the Commissioner.

No. 139.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, September* 29, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your Lordship's information, that Sir Peter Lumsden arrived here on the 22nd instant, having performed the journey from London to Tehran in eighteen days. The Persian authorities, by the Shah's express orders, have shown him every attention, both at Resht and on his way to the capital. Carriages were sent by the Persian Government to meet him at Cazveen, and on his arrival at Tehran he was received by an Istikball, or complimentary deputation, sent to compliment him on the part of the Shah.

I presented Sir Peter Lumsden and the other members of the Afghan Commission to the Shah yesterday, at a special audience given for the purpose. His Majesty inquired if the arrangements made for the journey from Resht had been satisfactory, and said that he wished every facility to be afforded to the Commissioners in the prosecution of their journey onwards to the frontier. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was present, was accordingly desired by His Majesty to carry out any suggestions that I might make with this object.

No. 140.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, October* 3, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your Lordship's information, that Sir Peter Lumsden, with Mr. Stephen, Mr. Herbert, Captain Barrow, and Mirza Hassan Ali Khan, left this yesterday for Khorassan and the Afghan border, where they expect to arrive about the 7th November.

Most of the horses required for the journey had been purchased before the Commission arrived here. Servants had also been engaged and other arrangements made, and during the last ten days, while waiting for the heavy baggage to arrive from Resht all remaining preparations were completed. The Persian Government have sent a Mehmandar and escort of cavalry with the Commission to Shahrood, where the Khorassan territory commences, and telegraphic orders have been dispatched by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Governor-General of that province desiring him to send his own agents to Shahrood with an escort of forty or fifty horsemen to accompany the party thence to Meshed.

I have arranged to dispatch one of the Legation Gholams to Meshed once a-month on the arrival of the messenger from Constantinople, and a courier will also be sent from Meshed to this place so as to arrive in time for the monthly messenger leaving with despatches for the Foreign Office.

No. 141.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, October* 20, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, a letter from the Meshed Agent, reporting the arrangements made by the Asaph-ed-Dowleh for the reception at Meshed of the British members of the Afghan Boundary Commission who are passing through that town on their way to Sarakhs.

Inclosure in No. 141.

The Meshed Agent to Sir R. Thomson.

(Translated Abstract.) *October* 4, 1884.

THE Asaph-ed-Dowleh showed me yesterday a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, announcing the approaching arrival of the British members of the Afghan Boundary Commission. Although the officers in question had no mission concerning Persia, an escort of thirty Persian Cossacks had been given them from Tehran to Shahrood, the frontier town of Khorassan, and within the limits of that province the Governor-General was to take the necessary steps for their comfort and security.

The Asaph-ed-Dowleh informed me that he had already arranged as to the escort, and had selected for the residence of the Commission the house of the Musteshar-ul-Moolk, which is the best in Meshed.

As there was no furniture to be had in Meshed, he had ordered the necessary articles to be made. In short, his Excellency had done his best for the reception of the Commission in the most suitable manner possible.

No. 142.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 3.)

My Lord, *Tehran, October* 22, 1884.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 11th instant, instructing me to inform the Persian Government in writing of the approaching meeting of the English and Russian members of the Afghan Boundary Commission, within the Persian territory, at Sarakhs, I addressed a Memorandum to that effect, of which I inclose a copy, to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting his Excellency, at the same time, to make the necessary arrangements for the reception of the British Commissioners at Sarakhs.

In compliance with a request received from Sir Peter Lumsden, I also asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs to send instructions by telegraph to the Governor-General of Khorassan to furnish an escort to accompany the Commission from Sherifabad to Kuhsan on the Herat frontier.

I have now the honour to acquaint your Lordship that the necessary orders have been sent by the Persian Government for the fulfilment of both these requests, and that the Governor-General has been further directed to ascertain from Sir Peter Lumsden what supplies will be required by the British Commissioners at Sarakhs, and to make arrangements for their being furnished at fair market rates.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Memorandum.

I HAVE been instructed by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform the Persian Government that it is proposed that the English and Russian Commissioners should meet at Sarakhs, within the Persian territory on the left bank of the Heri-Rud, before proceeding to carry out the delimitation of the Afghan frontier.

In making this communication to your Excellency I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to obtain authority from His Majesty the Shah for instructions being sent to the Persian officials on the frontier and local authorities at Sarakhs to afford the English Commissioners all possible facilities as regards accommodation and supplies during their passage to and temporary residence at Sarakhs.

I shall feel obliged also if your Excellency will cause a telegraphic instruction to be dispatched to the Governor-General of Khorassan to furnish Sir Peter Lumsden with an escort to accompany him to the neighbourhood of Kuhsan, on the Herat frontier, from Sherifabad, at which place he will arrive on the 27th instant.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Tehran, October 13, 1884.

No. 143.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

My Lord, *Tehran, November* 4, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a copy of a despatch received from Mr. Finn, reporting the measures taken by the frontier authorities for the reception of the Afghan Boundary Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 143.

Consul Finn to Sir R. Thomson.

(Extract.) *Turbat Sheikh Jam, October* 6, 1884.

I HAVE only just received news from Herat, dated the 25th September, by which I am informed that, in spite of the consequent advance in the price of provisions, the inhabitants are greatly pleased at the proposed passage through that place of a body of British soldiers; that the Deputy Governor has, by orders of the Ameer, laid out at each station up to Herat provisions for 1,000 men, but that from there he proposes accompanying the escort himself, with a detachment composed of one regiment of regular cavalry, 1,500 Herat irregular cavalry, 200 infantry, and 2 guns; Yusuf Khan, Governor of Furrah, has been sent back in haste to his post, from Cabul, so as to be there when Colonel Ridgeway and his party arrive.

General Quoseddeen Khan, who has hitherto been at Murghab, has been sent to Meruchak to superintend the works of irrigation, which it is proposed shall be undertaken there.

No. 144.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

My Lord, *Tehran, November* 6, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith an extract of a Report I have received from Meshed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 144.

Report dated October 20, 1884.

(Translated Abstract.)

GENERAL KOMAROFF is expected to arrive shortly at Old Sarakhs. The Salors who were settled at Merv have been ordered to emigrate to Old Sarakhs. It is said that 1,000 Téké families will also be established close to the same place. Several Afghan fugitives, partisans of Eyoub Khan, have been stopped by the Russians on their way to Bokhara by Merv, and sent back to Sarakhs.

No. 145.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 3.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, October* 1, 1884.

BEFORE starting for the frontier I think it right to briefly report to your Lordship unofficial conversations which I have had with Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff and M. Melnikoff (Russian Minister in Persia) with regard to the delimitation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan.

Being detained for twenty-four hours at Tiflis, on the 16th instant, owing to there

being no direct train that day from Batoum to Baku, I thought it my duty to pay my respects to the Governor-General of the Caucasus, accompanied by Mr. Condie Stephen.

The Prince, who received me very cordially, introduced me to my Russian colleague, General Zelenoi, who was present during the whole of the interview, together with Colonel Shepeleff, his Excellency's Military Secretary. After some general conversation, during which both the Prince and General Zelenoi expressed their satisfaction at the fortunate coincidence of their happening to be at Tiflis at the time of our passage through the town, the former inquired on what date, and at what spot, the Commission was to assemble, declaring that neither he nor General Zelenoi had received any information whatever on the subject; and adding that the latter was on the point of starting for St. Petersburgh to receive his instructions. In reply, I informed his Excellency that the date proposed was the 1st November, but that I should not be able to reach the frontier before the 7th. As regards the place of meeting, I understood that Sarakhs was the spot named. The Prince then went on to describe his own visit to those regions, maintaining that he knew absolutely nothing as to the recent views of the Russian Government on the subject, and assuring me that his sole object in referring to the matter was out of friendship to me. He himself saw no reason why the Commission should not complete their labours in a very short space of time, say, three months, if only a previous understanding were established between the two Governments on two points, namely, the starting-point on the Heri-Rud, and the point where the frontier-line would cross the Murghab. Between Khoja Saleh and Ankhoi all the Commission would have to do would be to draw an imaginary line. The portion bordering on Maimeneh was, it was true, very important, but it was well defined and ought not to occasion any disputes. It would be in drawing a satisfactory line from that neighbourhood westward to the Heri-Rud that the main difficulty would lie. He then referred to the question of Penjdeh, maintaining that the Sarik Turkomans living there had never paid tribute to the Ameer, but simply certain annual sums for permission for their flocks to graze on the rich slopes of the Upper Murghab. If such payments were to be regarded as tribute, it might equally well be maintained that the Yuletan Sariks owed allegiance to the Ameer, for they had also, from time to time, paid sums to the Government of Herat in the shape of customs dues. I replied that I was not prepared to enter upon the subject of Yuletan, the information I possessed with regard to that Settlement being at present very vague, but with respect to Penjdeh, there was the strongest proof that that place had formed, and still continued to form, a portion of Afghanistan. The inhabitants had always paid tribute to the Ameer, and had even occasionally supplied the Herat Government with a small body of horsemen, and had for the last thirty years permitted an Afghan Representative to reside among them as their Governor. I was even told that there was a spot, about 30 to 40 miles to the north of Penjdeh, called Kale Birun, which had always been known to the natives as the actual frontier of Afghanistan on the Murghab. In reply to an inquiry made by Mr. Stephen with regard to certain rumours to which the Prince had alluded in a previous interview that morning, his Excellency stated that a report of a somewhat vague character had reached him to the effect that, owing to the advance of Afghan troops, the Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh were preparing to withdraw their cattle from the neighbouring hills and to collect them at Penjdeh, with a view to emigrating to Yuletan.

The Prince desired me to consider the discussion we had had as purely academical.

At the interview which I had with M. Melnikoff on the 24th instant, at Gulahek, the same arguments were used, his Excellency making particular inquiries as to whether Her Majesty's Government were prepared to encourage any interference of any third Power in the work of the Commission, or in questions as to the boundary between Persia and Afghanistan.

I replied that the frontier between Afghanistan and Persia was clearly defined by maps, and that I had received distinct instructions to reject any claim that she might raise to territory on the right bank of the Heri-Rud. The present negotiations would be carried on exclusively between the Russian and English Governments, and I should, without any hesitation, refuse to enter on the question of the frontier relations between Persia and Afghanistan.

M. Melnikoff seemed, on the whole, satisfied with this statement, saying that if the question were discussed by the two, and not by the three Governments, he saw no reason why there should be any serious divergence of opinion, and the negotiations not be brought to a speedy and satisfactory settlement.

No. 146.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received December 3, 1·41 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *November 27, 1884.*

THE advance of a small Afghan outpost to Sari-Yazi was necessitated by a previous movement of Russian troops to Sanduk-Kuchan, 10 miles north of that spot.

After my departure from Sarakhs, where Colonel Alikhanoff acknowledged that Panjdeh had been an Afghan outpost and Sari-Yazi the boundary, he and General Komaroff advanced with some 300 cavalry and joined troops already stationed at Sanduk-Kuchan, with a view of visiting Panjdeh. Afghan General sent word that he could not allow them to pass. Former halted and proposed interview with the General, which apparently never took place.

No. 147.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received December 8, 6·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *December 1, 1884.*

I SHALL arrive at Pul-i-Khisti to-morrow. I am informed that General Komaroff and Colonel Alikhanoff have returned to Merv. So far as I can learn, Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh are well-disposed towards their present Ruler, and are cultivating land along Kushk River, thus showing intention of remaining Afghan subjects. Shall impress on Ameer importance of treating them liberally.

No. 148.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December 9, 1884.*

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me to-day and communicated to me the substance of a despatch which he had received from his Government on the subject of the Afghan boundary.

In this despatch, which was dated the 29th ultimo, M. de Giers, after referring to the communications which have passed between himself and your Excellency, stated with respect to the difference of opinion between the two Cabinets as regards the limits of the zone, within which the work of the Commission is to be confined, that the Russian Government have been obliged to adhere to the views which they have expressed, and that the arguments adduced by Her Majesty's Government in favour of allowing the Commissioners to come to an agreement with regard to the limits of the zone do not appear to them at all conclusive; that having no relations with the Afghan authorities, they do not feel called upon to alter their opinion on account of Sir Peter Lumsden being obliged to previously consult the Afghan Delegate who has been commissioned to confer with him by the Ameer, and that the Russian Government are particularly anxious to avoid the complications likely to arise in the event of the Commissioners failing to come to an understanding. M. de Giers observed that with a view to facilitate a solution of the difficulty, the Russian Government had instructed their Commissioner to draw up a proposal as to the zone for submission to Her Majesty's Government through your Excellency. M. de Staal urged that advantage should be taken of the delay which must elapse before the Commissioners can commence work, to consult Sir Peter Lumsden in regard to the proposed zone. His Excellency said that the Russian Government, while ready to examine in a spirit of conciliation any remarks which Sir P. Lumsden might have to make, would no doubt feel obliged to insist on the adoption of their proposal in its essential points.

M. de Giers, after referring to his conversations with your Excellency respecting the advance of the Russian troops to Pul-i-Khatun and of the Afghan forces on the Murghab, states that it has been impossible for the Russian Government to share the views of Her Majesty's Government in regard to this question, that having succeeded in establishing tranquillity in the Turkoman steppes, they were forced to seek means to consolidate the state of affairs created by Russia, and to take steps against the disorder, which there was every reason to apprehend in consequence of the considerable military preparations of the Afghans on the northern borders of Herat and the

approach of the British escort, the numbers of which greatly exceeded what had been agreed upon.

M. de Giers observes that the establishment of an advanced Russian post at Pul-i-Khatun had no other object than the above, that this place had never formed part of Afghanistan, and was moreover too far removed from the northern frontier of that country to interfere with the direction of the frontier-line, the delimitation of which, in accordance with the principles of the Agreement of 1872-73, should be carried out with reference to the possessions of the Ameer Sheer Ali, that the evidence of Colonel MacGregor, referred to by General Zelenoi in his proposal, indicates very clearly the limits of those possessions.

With regard to the recent encroachments of the Afghan forces, M. de Giers states that even if the Sarik Turkomans established at Penjdeh formerly paid tribute to Afghanistan, this fact would not of itself confirm the claim of the present Ameer to the place, looking to the fact that it had never been occupied by Afghan troops, and that its population had always enjoyed complete independence, that from the commencement of the present negotiations it had been pointed out to Her Majesty's Government that designs appeared to be entertained at Herat against the independence of Penjdeh, but that in spite of these representations the place had been occupied by Afghans who, according to recent reports, had even advanced beyond Sari Yazi.

M. de Giers concludes by observing that this state of affairs is calculated seriously to compromise the success of the negotiations.

The Russian Ambassador stated to me that he was instructed to call my very serious attention to the state of affairs which he had described to me.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 149.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received December 16, 5·40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Penjdeh, December 8, 1884.*

I HAVE been received with great cordiality here by the Afghan officials and Turkoman Elders. Afghan Government is fully established, and has strengthened natural stronghold at junction of rivers; outpost at Sari-Yazi has been withdrawn. Have impressed on Afghan officials vital necessity for just and lenient treatment of the Sariks, whose future allegiance entirely depends on their action. Every facility has been given for survey operations between the Heri-Rud and the Murghab, which, should weather permit, will extend east towards the Oxus.

No. 150.

Mr. Godley to Sir J. Pauncefote.—(Received December 16.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of the Earl of Kimberley forwards herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a telegram relative to the movements of Colonel Ridgeway.

India Office, December 16, 1884.

Inclosure in No. 150.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Telegraphic.) *December 16, 1884.*

AFGHAN Boundary Commission.

Ridgeway arrived at Kushk, about 95 miles from Kuhsan, on the 3rd December, and intended leaving for Bala Murghab on the 5th. All well, population very friendly.

No. 151.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 21, 6·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *December*, 1884.

ZONE of operations being uninhabited and water scarce, earliest intimation required in order to secure supplies. Escorts of each Commission should not exceed 100 horsemen.

Does Russian Government still adhere to 27th January as date of meeting of Commission at Sarakhs?

No. 152.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 22.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 17, 1884.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have again expressed to M. de Giers the hope entertained by Her Majesty's Government that the advanced post of Russian troops now at Pul-i-Khatun should be withdrawn to Old Sarakhs.

His Excellency has, however, replied that he has conferred upon the subject with the Minister of War, who thinks it impossible to take this step. His Excellency states that the Turkomans, to whom the lands in that neighbourhood actually belonged, had appealed to the Russian authorities for protection; that this had been promised to them; and on the faith of that promise the Turkomans had returned for the purpose of putting their lands under cultivation, and had given up the wandering and predatory life which they had previously led. The Russian Government were now bound in honour not to abandon them, and it was only for their protection that an advanced post had been placed at Pul-i-Khatun.

General Zelenoi will leave this city in two or three days for Tiflis, where he will make his final preparations before joining Sir P. Lumsden. Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, the Governor-General of the Caucasus, arrived here yesterday.

M. de Giers informed me this afternoon that he hoped soon to receive an answer from Her Majesty's Government with regard to the proposals made by the Russian Government as to the zone within which the Boundary Commissioners are to operate, and his Excellency intimated that General Zelenoi would probably remain at Tiflis until some arrangement should have been arrived at on that point.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 153.

Earl Granville to M. de Staal.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, December* 23, 1884.

I HAVE consulted Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in regard to the communication which your Excellency made to me on the 9th instant on the subject of the proposal that a zone should be laid down, within which the work of the Afghan Boundary Commission should be confined; and I have now the honour to acquaint you that Her Majesty's Government, being desirous of meeting, as far as possible, the wishes of the Russian Government in this matter, are prepared to agree that the Commissioners should be instructed not to extend these inquiries beyond the line which has been proposed by your Excellency as the northern limit of the zone, and which would run from a point on the right bank of the Heri-Rud opposite Dowletabad direct to the Murghab, crossing the river above Imam Bakhsh, and thence to Khoja Saleh. It would, however, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, be undesirable to attempt any preliminary definition of the southern limit of the zone.

I think it right to add that Her Majesty's Government do not agree with the Russian Government that Puli Khatun and Penjdeh are outside the limits of Afghanistan, but they consider that these questions must be decided by the Commissioners on the spot.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 154.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 24, 1884.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a note which I have addressed to the Russian Ambassador,* stating that Her Majesty's Government accept the northern line of the zone proposed by Russia within which the inquiries of the Afghan Boundary should be confined, but that they consider it undesirable to attempt any definition of the southern limit of the zone.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 155.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 27.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 24, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an abstract from an article in the "Novoe Vremya" of the 23rd instant, giving a précis of a paper read by M. Lessar at a recent meeting of the Russian Geographical Society with regard to the annexation of Merv and the features of the country between it and Penjdeh.

The article insists on the necessity of bringing the whole of the Saryk and Salor Turkomans under Russian rule, and that the frontier to be laid down should be a natural and ethnographical boundary, evidently pointing at the Paropamisus Range as the necessary frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 155.

Abstract from the "Novoe Vremya" Newspaper of December 11 (23), 1884.

SOUTH-WESTERN TURKOMANIA.—At a recent meeting of the Russian Geographical Society M. Lessar read a new paper on South-western Turkomania. In this communication he described all the circumstances attending the annexation of Merv.

After the subjugation of the Akhal Téké country, the hopeless condition of the Mervees became apparent both to them and to their neighbours.

In the spring of 1883 a certain Siakh-Pushem appeared among the Turkomans accompanied by one Afghan and two Hindoos. Fixing his abode by turns at Péndé and Jol-Otan, he and his followers paid occasional visits to Merv, where they incited the people against the Russians. He promised them arms, powder, and money, also to bring an army to their aid. As, however, he proved not to have money enough even to pay for his escort, he soon lost the confidence of the Mervees. That Siakh-Pushem was an English product can hardly be doubted. Complete anarchy reigned at Merv in the summer of 1883. People did not know what to do, and it became both necessary and desirable to give support to the party that gravitated towards Russia.

A small Russian detachment stationed at Kary-Bent (on the Tejend) penetrated into the heart of the Oasis, and on the 4th (16th) March, 1884, occupied Kaùshùt-Khan-Khala. This occupation was effected at the cost of a few shots, which were fired by the members of the party instigated by Siakh-Pushem, and whose proceedings were opposed by an overwhelming majority of their countrymen. The whole loss sustained on our side by the annexation consisted of one soldier killed, and the expenditure of a few thousand roubles. The tact and firmness evinced on the occasion by General Komaroff, the Military Governor, cannot be too highly eulogized. The result of the occupation of Merv was the establishment of proper relations with the Saryks and Salors living to the south, along the course of the Murghab and Heri-Rud. The Saryks occupy the Jol-Otan and Péndé Oases, situated along the upper course of the Murghab, and the relations between these Saryks and the Mervees are so intimate in every respect that it was only natural, after the annexation of Merv, the latter should

* No. 153.

also seek to be subjected to Russian rule. M. Lessar, taking advantage of the return of the Saryk Deputies to their homes, accompanied them, with the object of completing the information he had gained of their country on previous journeys.

After visiting Jol-Otan, he travelled to Péndé and advanced along the Kushku, an affluent of the Murghab, as far as Tchemin-i-bid, from whence he turned westwards to Ak-Rabat; from this point he skirted the rich Er-Oilain salt lakes, passing Kuyun-Kui Wells, and then returned to Jol-Otan. In this manner he traversed 520 versts, or about 347 miles.

We shall not on this occasion enter on a detailed account of this country. Suffice it to say that M. Lessar's paper contained a clear exposition of the character of that portion of the Turkoman country which will possess predominating importance in the impending delimitation of the frontier with Afghanistan.

Watching with undistinguished alarm and mistrust the advance of Russia southwards, the English did not remain indifferent to our establishment at Merv. It became evident to them that the annexation of that oasis would naturally be followed by the acquisition on the part of Russia of the whole of the south-western Turkoman country, such addition to our territory making us at the same time near neighbours of Herat. The annexation of the territory in question, from which Russia cannot abstain, in view of the necessity of maintaining order and tranquillity within her boundaries, would not possess any threatening character were it not for the circumstance that the English suspect us of entertaining some kind of projects against Afghanistan and Mussulman India, and if they did not attach immense, though undue, importance to Herat.

Vambéry, in a recently published article, while ridiculing the idea of the Afghan Boundary Commission, does not recognize Herat as the key to India, but attaches such a signification to Afghanistan. This fruitless creation of imaginary keys is, in our opinion, a most incongruous phenomenon of English politics, as disagreeable to the English as it is to other Powers. The English have thus created for themselves a Herat of the importance it does not possess, and it is very possible that the impressionable Asiatics now also look at it in the English light.

In this manner the Indian Government, regarding our annexations as a menace to India, have sounded an alarm. Lord Dufferin is now insisting on the disbanding of the armies maintained by the semi-independent native Princes. A Commission, under Sir Peter Lumsden, has also been sent for the delimitation of the Russian and Afghan frontier. In the opinion of Vambéry, this Commission will not satisfy the expectations of English politicians, because Russia cannot abstain from securing for herself a natural and an ethnographical boundary. Moreover, it will be difficult to expect a proper observance of the boundary on the part of the Afghans, and consequently by the Russians. . . .

It is reported that the Russian Commissioner and his staff have not yet started. We do not know whether this delay proceeds from the unfavourable season, or whether it is to be attributed to other causes.

If Vambéry's opinion of the probable results of the future labours of the Commission be right, this fanciful scheme will prove barren for the English and still more sterile for Russia. The participation of the English can in no way conduce to the furtherance of our interests, but the Commission which will be "useless" for the English may prove injurious to us if sufficient firmness be not shown in laying down a rational line of frontier.

Russia cannot admit any other boundary than that based on the ethnography of the country. The violation of the integrity of the Turkoman country will inevitably engender complications and call forth misunderstandings with Afghanistan.

No. 156.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received December* 27, 4·30 P.M)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, December* 19, 1884.

AMEER writes on the 5th instant, protesting strongly against continued occupation of Pul-i-Khatun by Russian troops.

No. 157.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December 26, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Listok" newspaper of the 8th (20th) December, 1884, at a general meeting of the Imperial Geographical Society, held on the 5th (17th) December, 1884, it was resolved to fit out in the spring of 1885 a large expedition to Central Asia for an exhaustive and complete investigation of the Merv and Akhal territory recently annexed to Russia.

The members of the expedition are to be divided into groups, which will act independently in the work of exploration. One of the groups will be in direct communication with the Russian Afghan Boundary Commissioners.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 158.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December 29, 1884.*

I HAVE been in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India on the subject of your telegram of the 9th instant, relative to the zone proposed by Russia within which the investigations of the Boundary Commission should be confined.

I have to inform you that, in view of the strong representations which have been made by Russia on the subject, and of the importance of not allowing the negotiations to break down on a point of detail, Her Majesty's Government have accepted the northern limit of the zone which was telegraphed to you on the 28th ultimo, and which they understand to run north of the desert.

Her Majesty's Government have refused to agree to any southern limit at all, their object being on the one hand not to fetter the freedom of action of the Commission in districts as to the possession of which real doubts may be found to exist, and on the other hand not to imply even the possibility of doubt as to the rights of the Ameer of Afghanistan so far south as the southern line proposed by Russia.

Her Majesty's Government have learnt from St. Petersburgh that the Russian Commissioner, General Zelenoi, is leaving for Tiflis, and that he will probably remain there pending a settlement of the question with regard to the zone.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 159.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received January 1, 1885.)

(Extract.) *Meshed, November 2, 1884.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that I arrived at Meshed on the 31st ultimo, and was received with marked distinction by the authorities, under the orders of the Governor-General of Khorassan.

The Governor of Tabbas and Sertip Abdoolah Khan, commanding the Hamadan Regiment, came out some miles, with carriages and a large escort, to meet us, and made us welcome in the name of the Governor-General, who had ordered an encampment of his own tents to be pitched for us in the Massulah Garden.

It is only some three months since Mirza Abdul Wahab Khan, Asuf-ed-Dowleh, was appointed to the Governor-Generalship of Khorassan, and in every direction there are signs of a more vigorous rule than has hitherto existed. The Asuf-ed-Dowleh is a man of 50 to 60 years of age, active both in mind and body, and is reputed to be an excellent scholar in Eastern literature.

I proceed to-morrow for Sarakhs, to ascertain the correctness of reports that are circulating with regard to the advance of Russian troops through Charjui to the neighbourhood of Yulatan, and of a detachment of Cossacks to Pul-i-Khatun. I shall thence reconnoitre the country along the Heri-Rud as far as Kuhsan, where I hope to

meet my escort on the 19th November, and, after consultation with the Afghan authorities, select a spot for our winter quarters pending the arrival of General Zelenoi.

No. 160.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 1, 1885.)

(Extract.) *Kuhsan, November* 21, 1884.

ON my arrival at Noroozabad on the 7th instant I was met by Vali Mahomed Khan Jemshedi, who was on his way to join us at Sarakhs, with an escort of 100 horsemen, in accordance with the instructions of the Governor of Herat. He confirmed the rumour, contained in my telegram of the 31st ultimo, with regard to the advance of Russian Cossacks to Pul-i-Khatun.

No. 161.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 1, 1885.)

My Lord, *Kuhsan, November* 22, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, copy of a letter which I addressed to His Highness the Ameer of Afghanistan, announcing my appointment to the charge of the Commission for the definement of the boundary of Northern Afghanistan, together with a translation of His Highness' reply.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 161.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

My Friend, *August* 28, 1884.

IT was with great pleasure that I received from Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, Empress of India, the announcement of my nomination to the charge of the Commission for the definement of the boundary of Northern Afghanistan.

I have in remembrance the great hospitality and kindness paid to my brother and myself by your grandfather, the great Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, during our sojourn at Candahar in 1857.

I cannot forget the friendship of many years which existed between your father, the Ameer Mahomed Afzal Khan, and my brother, and the like good feeling evinced by your uncle, the Ameer Mahomed Azim Khan, towards both of us.

The remembrance of these acts induces me to hope that my present mission may prove the opportunity of establishing a life-bond of friendship between us, and a peaceful understanding in the alignment of your frontier, the establishment of which is a matter of the greatest importance, tending to maintain the integrity of your kingdom, and to prevent disputes with neighbouring countries, which, although insignificant in origin, might develop, without previous understanding, into serious consequences.

Accompanied by a few officers, I am about to proceed towards your frontier, by Tehran, and hope to meet the party coming from India about the beginning of November in Herat territory, where, after ascertaining the limits of your kingdom and rights of your subjects from the competent authorities deputed by you, I may be able to explain all disputed points which may arise when I meet the Russian members of the Commission on the frontier.

On my arrival at Tehran I purpose communicating direct with the Governor of Herat as to the probable dates of my arrival within his province, feeling confident that your Highness will have given all the necessary instructions for my reception.

Inclosure 2 in No. 161.

The Ameer of Afghanistan to Major-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(Translation.)

(After compliments.) 11*th Moharrem*, 1302 (*October* 31, 1884).

YOUR friendly letter was forwarded to me by the Foreign Secretary on the 17th October.

You inform me of your appointment for the delimitation of the Afghan-Russian frontier, also of the good wishes of the English Government for the good and prosperity of this important affair. You have also mentioned the former friendship which existed between your brother and my late father and my uncle, Ameer Mahomed Azim Khan, and said that you never could forget that friendship, and appreciated it for ever, and that you would on this undertaking, especially on the disputed frontier-lines between the God-granted Afghanistan Government and the Russian Government, settle the case in a good and appropriate manner.

I, the slave of God, who have a sincere friendship towards the English Government, have great appreciation and consideration for all the English officers, wherever they may be, and especially for yourself, whom I respect, honour, and appreciate your friendship, and who, with the appreciation of former friendship, have stepped in for the delimitation of the frontier-line between the two Governments, which is a great service that you render to your own Government, and is an advantage to the Afghan Government.

I hope that you will with great courage and valour negotiate with the Russian Agents regarding the disputed frontier-line, and that you may rest assured that they have not in hand a dot in writing from me at any time which may be a pretext to enable them to enter and take possession of the Afghan land. I am so firm in resisting for my rights, that if the Russian Agents should wish to take a piece of fragment from the ruins of the Afghanistan frontier, it will be impossible for them to do so as long as the Afghans have strength and power to resist.

In conclusion, I express that I am much contented and pleased at your appointment on this service, and that I consider you my sincere friend and the well-wisher of both Governments (the British and the Afghan). I also appreciate your former and your future friendship.

No. 162.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received January 1, 1885.)

My Lord, *Kuhsan, November* 21, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, a copy of correspondence regarding the advance of Russia on the Murghab.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 162.

Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan to Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway.

(After compliments.) *November* 7, 1884.

I HAVE received a letter to-day from the Governor of Herat, which runs as follows:—

"My Brother,

"With regard to the request of Colonel Ridgeway that, as it will be necessary that the members of the Commission should pass the winter in the north of Herat, in Maruchak or Panjdeh, a village may be set aside for them, I beg to inform you that in Maruchak or Panjdeh there are all Turkoman khargahs and no roofed houses or villages or forts. If ordered by His Highness, I will procure 100 khargahs from Kila Nau and Kushuk and from the Turkomans of Panjdeh. The new fort of Maruchak, which is being constructed, and the two barracks of which will soon be finished, and which can give shelter to a regiment, is situated at a long distance from the frontier. I think no other arrangement can be made excepting the khargahs.

"The district of Panjdeh is still in the occupation of the Afghan troops. Nearly 100 Russians, who are now at Hazrat Imam, in Yulatan, came and planted flags at a distance of 9 or 10 farsakhs and went away. Our advanced guard saw the flags, but no Russians. They struck down two or three flags of theirs (Russians), and returned to their post situated at a distance of 4 farsakhs from Panjdeh. Our men will be very watchful until the boundary question is settled. If God please, I will keep the frontiers in peace until the arrival of the Commission and yourself."

I send this for your information.

Inclosure 2 in No. 162.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan.

November 7, 1884.

I HAVE received your letter dated to-day, giving in it an extract from the Governor of Herat's letter to your address, and have understood its contents. I will communicate the contents to Sir Peter Lumsden; but it seems to me that kibitkas (if enough can be obtained) will do very well. I am quite prepared to pay for them if His Highness the Ameer will allow me.

With regard to the intelligence from Panjdeh, the Governor should impress on his officials the necessity of avoiding any collision with the Russians; any hostile action of the Governor would give them an excuse for sending troops nearer the place of dispute; but doubtless the Governor of Herat has reported the facts to Sir Peter Lumsden and taken his Excellency's advice.

Inclosure 3 in No. 162.

Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan to Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway.

(After compliments.) *November* 10, 1884.

I HAVE just received a letter from the Governor of Herat to my address to the following effect:—

"News has been received from the officials in Panjdeh to the effect that the Russian officer and eight sowars, and the sons of Sari Khan of Yulatan, who were not allowed by our sowars to enter the district of Panjdeh, returned to Sanduk Kachan. Great many sowars are about to join them, and they intend to come to Pul-i-Khisti to pitch their tents there and to make it their supply depôt; that General Ghaus-ud-din Khan, who is stationed in Panjdeh with 400 footmen, 100 sowars, and 2 guns, has gone to the frontier of Panjdeh, so as to be face to face with the Russians, *i.e.*, to oppose them; that our officers have applied for more regular sowars.

"I therefore write to inquire what is your opinion with regard to the dispatch of more sowars to Panjdeh. Whatever your opinion may be, please write at once so that I may act accordingly. Our officer, General Ghaus-ud-din Khan, has written to the Russian officer, who is at Sanduk Kachan, informing him that Panjdeh belongs to Afghanistan, and that the Russians should not enter it, because, he said, if the Russians entered it, quarrel would ensue."

I therefore beg to inquire what is your opinion and advice in the matter of sending regular sowars to Panjdeh, and what treatment the Russians should receive, if they enter Panjdeh, by hand of the Afghan officials. Please send me the reply by this evening ("Khuptan"), because the Governor of Herat has requested me to send the reply at once, and the bearer of his letter is also waiting for it, so that the reply may reach the Governor to-morrow at midday.

You were pleased to say that I ought to procure old written documents in support of our claim for Panjdeh in case there was a question raised about it by the Russians, and I therefore informed the Governor of Herat accordingly. I now beg to inclose a copy of a Firman from Taimur Shah issued from Cabul to the names of the Khans of Panjdeh, Sarakhs, &c. Up to this moment I have procured this Firman only, and will try to get more.

Inclosure 4 in No. 162.

Translation of a Firman issued by Taimur Shah, dated Jamadin Sani, 1199 A.H.

Order.

BE it known to the Khans of Dereghez, Merv, Sarakhs, Panjdeh, &c., who are favoured in the Royal favours, that as in this time we have ordered that all the servants be ready and present, and that all the Khans and Chiefs of the tribes should keep their strong followers, well equipped and horsed ready for the journey with great discipline from Herat to Cabul to present themselves to the King, and also separate orders have been issued to each of them to act accordingly, it is therefore written that as soon as the Khans, &c., come to know of this order, they should get their followers ready and accompany Hamid Khan, Durani Ishakzai, from Herat to Cabul, and should act as directed.

Inclosure 5 in No. 162.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan.

November 10, 1884.

I HAVE received your letter and considered its contents as carefully as possible, as you wish for a reply to-night. I hope the Governor of Herat has communicated this information to Sir Peter Lumsden; whether he has done so or not, I shall immediately send the General a copy of your letter. The news contained in it seems additional reasons for our proceeding to Panjdeh with as little delay as possible; but I do not see any cause for serious disquietude on your part. I would only repeat the advice given in my letter of the 7th November not to do anything which will provoke collision with the Russians, and add that it is for the Joint Commission to inquire as to the true frontier of Afghanistan, and nothing that is done in the meantime by any Russian party will be allowed to prejudice the just rights of His Highness the Ameer. Russia and England are fully in accord on this subject; and I feel sure that no Russian officer will think of forcibly entering a place already occupied by Afghan troops. I do not understand from your letter whether Pul-i-Khishti is actually held by Afghan troops or not. As far as the Russians are concerned, I see no necessity for your sending any more Afghan troops to Panjdeh; but it seems to me decidedly desirable that we should proceed there as soon as possible. I am not quite sure that Sir Peter Lumsden will find it practicable to do this, but I think he will, and I therefore suggest your giving immediate orders for the laying out of supplies by the direct road from Kuhsan to Panjdeh. It seems from the Map to follow the valley of the Kushk. The news that we are on our way there will soon reach Panjdeh, and this will reassure the population.

Inclosure 6 in No. 162.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan.

November 12, 1884.

IN continuation of my letter of last evening relative to Panjdeh affairs, I would add a few words of advice regarding the necessity of the Afghan border officials keeping the Turkoman subjects of the Ameer under strict control, and preventing them from giving any cause of complaint to any Russian party which may be in their neighbourhood. It will thus be out of the power of any one to say that His Highness the Ameer does not control the Turkomans within his frontier. On the other hand, I need not impress upon you how undesirable it is at this moment to treat the Turkomans with undue severity, and thus to make them discontented with His Highness' rule.

I thank you for the copy of Taimur Shah's Firman, contained in your letter of the 10th November. I have read it with much interest, and will show it to Sir Peter Lumsden.

Inclosure 7 in No. 162.

Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan to Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway.

(After compliments.) *November* 12, 1884.

I HAVE received a letter from the Governor of Herat, dated yesterday, in which he informs me that everything is all right in Panjdeh, and forwards copy of a letter from General Ghaus-ud-din Khan to his address, which I send for your information. I hope you will kindly let me know what is your advice in this matter, so that I may inform the Governor accordingly. So long as you are in this part of the country, I hope you will be pleased to answer my letters soon, because the Governor of Herat always asks my advice, and I do nothing without your advice.

Inclosure 8 in No. 162.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan.

November 12, 1884.

I HAVE received and fully considered the contents of your letter of to-day. It is satisfactory to learn that the Russian sowars, with whom Muhammad Alam Khan communicated, assured him that they would not enter the Afghan limits. I need not remind you that the relations of England and Afghanistan on the one hand and Russia on the other are friendly, and therefore your officials on the frontier should be studiously courteous in their communications with the Russians. And they should be specially careful not to say anything which could be considered as an admission that they cannot control the inhabitants of places occupied by Afghan troops.

In the conclusion of General Ghaus-ud-din's letter reference is made to five persons who have crossed the river. I do not understand from this letter and previous letters who these persons are, whose servants they are, and what is their individual nationality.

Inclosure 9 in No. 162.

Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan to Major-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(Extract.) *Kuhsan, November* 20, 1884.

LETTERS were received from General Ghaus-ud-din Khan, commanding the troops in Panjdeh, to the effect that the Russians would attack him, and that he might be permitted to repulse their attack.

I informed you of the contents of those letters yesterday, and you were pleased to say that I should not permit him to fight with the Russians, as you said you had written to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to request the Russian authorities not to allow their officers to fight with the Afghans.

I begged you to write to me to this effect, so that I might send a copy of your letter to the General, and I now therefore remind you of that.

You were also pleased to say that no more troops should be sent to Panjdeh.

Inclosure 10 in No. 162.

Major-General Sir P. Lumsden to Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan.

(Extract.) *November* 21, 1884.

WITH regard to the movements of the Russians, I agree with the communications made to you on the subject by Colonel Ridgeway. I informed you verbally yesterday, and repeat now, that, in my opinion, it is extremely unlikely that any Russian party would attempt to enter a place occupied by Afghan troops when warned not to do so. Consequently, as matters stand at present, there appears to be no reason for sending any further troops to Panjdeh. Should any difficulty arise between your officials at Panjdeh and the Russians, I shall be near, and the question should be referred to me.

Inclosure 11 in No. 162.

Kazi Sad-ud-din Khan to Major-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(Extract.) *November* 22, 1884.

AS regards the P[illegible]leh affairs, I beg to represent that another letter has been received from General Ghaus-ud-din Khan, copy of which is sent to you. The servant of the Governor of Herat is waiting for a reply. I pray that you may be pleased to favour me with a reply, so that I may dismiss the Governor's men.

Inclosure 12 in No. 162

General Ghaus-ud-din Khan and Aminullah Khan to the Governor of Herat.

(Translation.) *November* 13, 1884.

IT is all quiet here. On Thursday night at 10 P.M. a letter was received from Muhamed Amin Khan Silmiski, to the effect that his man who returned from Yulatan on Wednesday informed him that not a single Russian was in Yulatan, but all of them had gone to Sarakhs. The seventeen Russian sowars who came to Hazrat Imam from Sanduk Kachan have also gone towards Sarakhs. The informant at Yulatan has informed the person who brought the above information that the Turkomans of Merv and Yulatan have promised to go and occupy Yulatan for the Russians, and that 500 Kakakli sowars have also been directed to accompany these Turkomans. They have not moved yet, but information will be sent at once if they move.

A servant of Aminullah Khan, who has come from Merv, states that the Russians intend to make improvements on the Yulatan and Sarakhs road, as they say troops are coming from both sides.

Ali Khan, the Governor of Merv, says that after the arrival of the (Russian) General at Sarakhs, and after he has paid a visit to him, he will send 200 sowars for the occupation of Panjdeh. Such news are generally received. We do not know whether they are trustworthy. If they really entertain evil intentions, we will oppose them with the few troops we have. You must know this. These are the news from that quarter. If they advance, what should we do? The British officers are well acquainted with these people and with the frontier.

No. 163.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 1, 1885.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, November* 22, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, in translation, a Report from Sarakhs respecting the proceedings of the Russians.

Inclosure in No. 163.

Extract from Report, dated November 4, 1884.

(Translation.)

IT is said that General Komarow is on his way to Old Sarakhs, where he is expected to arrive in a few days with 400 Cossacks, a regiment of infantry, and four guns.

On the receipt of this information, the Russians at once set 800 labourers at work to make the road between Old Sarakhs and Kaushid-Kaleh practicable for artillery.

A Russian Colonel with 200 Cossacks arrived at Old Sarakhs on the 23rd ultimo, and on the following day moved on towards Pul-i-Khatun, taking with him besides the Cossacks fifteen camels laden with ammunition and forty camels laden with provisions.

According to one account, this expedition is organized for the purpose of building a fort at Pul-i-Khatun, and according to another version, its object is to bring

over the 150 families of Salor Turkomans who are still at Zoorabad, not having yet renounced Persian protection. The Russians themselves talk of the expedition as a visit to Pul-i-Khatun, which they allege is the frontier village of the district of Old Sarakhs.

Since the return of the 700 camels sent out from Merv to Chaharjui to bring back soldiers, 200 more have been sent to the same place by Colonel Alikhanoff for the same purpose. It is said that the Russians intend to collect a force composed of six regiments of infantry with sixteen guns at a place called Piram Ali Khan, in the neighbourhood of Merv, on the road to Chaharjui. It is, again, said that the Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh have secretly agreed to become Russian subjects, and that the forces massed at New and Old Sarakhs are intended to protect them in their migration to Russian territory. It really looks as if the Russians had now determined to occupy both Zoorabad and Penjdeh.

I have first heard that ten more camel-loads of ammunition have been dispatched to Pul-i-Khatun, and that the Russians really intend to fortify that place.

The Russians have stationed patrols at Kaleh Koushid and Pul-i-Khatun, and will allow no one to pass those places in the direction of Herat without an order from the Persian Governor of Sarakhs.

Twenty Persian prisoners who have been released by the Russians from their captivity at 'Urganj and Shakan have arrived at New Sarakhs. They say that the Russian forces which they accompanied from Chaharjui to Merv consist of 800 infantry with 80 female camp-followers, 100 camels laden with ammunition, 25 waggons, and 1 gun.

No. 164.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 1, 1885.)

My Lord, *Tehran, December* 2, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith extracts of despatches I have received from Mr. Finn.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 164.

Consul Finn to Sir R. Thomson.

(Extract.) *Turbat Sheikh Jām, November* 9, 1884.

I HAVE only just heard here the news, with which I believe your Excellency is already acquainted, that a detachment of 150 Russian soldiers has been sent down to occupy a spot on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, opposite to Pul-i-Khatun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ALEXANDER FINN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 164.

Consul Finn to Sir R. Thomson.

Sir Peter Lumsden's Camp, Tomān Agha,
(Extract.) *November* 18, 1884.

ON the 24th instant I received a letter, by which Sir Peter Lumsden requested me to come to his camp at Sherifabad, as he wished to get some information from me, and as the same messenger brought me your Excellency's telegram I ventured to start at once, and comply with the General's request; thence I proceeded with him to Meshed. From there I returned to Turbat. After some days I again started, and met the General again at Gutar, 12 farsakhs distant; whence I have marched to this place, and I go back again to-morrow morning, when the camp goes on to Kohsan.

As two of the questions to which Sir Peter wanted immediate answers were

of considerable interest, I beg to submit to your Excellency the information I gathered for him.

In the first place, every one whom I have seen on the subject, whether Jamshidi, Teimouri, or Turkoman, unhesitatingly declared that the spot which is always understood to mark the boundary between Yulatan and Penjdeh is at a place called Kelleh (not Kala'eh) Beiroun; that the Yulatanis never cross or graze their flocks south of that spot, and that the inhabitants of Penjdeh never go north of it.

Secondly, I was asked whether Kellej Khan had built any "burjes" or towers on the Afghan side of the Heri-Rud. In answer, I was able to report that there were no fewer than thirteen of them along the water's edge (besides several more inland), either called or placed at—

1. Pul-i-Khatun.
2. Dahneh.
3. Germāb.
4. Gurd-i-Gaduk.
5. Yarilghan.
6. Keltāeh Qāyeh.
7. Zulfigār.
8. Dengli Khurd.
9. Dengli* Kalān.
10. Kāreez Eliās.
11. Dowli ("burjes" on either side of river).
12. Karānki, or Qaranqi.
13. Qarānli.

Sir Peter Lumsden is accompanied by 50 Jām horsemen, commanded by Nasrullah Khan, of Ferimān, and 100 Afghan cavalry, under Vali Mohammed Khan Jamshidi, who, having been sent by the Governor of Herat, joined the camp at Sarakhs. When these Herat horsemen arrived at Germāb, they found that the Russians had occupied a spot opposite Pul-i-Khatun, and, fearing that they might be stopped in the execution of their orders halted until nightfall, and then slipped past the picket in the dark.

On my way to Gutar, I passed through Zoorabad, and found that almost the whole of the Saloor Turkomans had already joined those under Tekkeh Khan at Sarakhs, only Mengli Khan and about forty or fifty families remaining.

No. 165.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 1, 1885.)

(Extract.) *Tehran, December* 2, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith translation of a Report from Sarakhs.

Inclosure in No. 165.

Report dated Sarakhs, November 13, 1884.

(Translation.)

ON the 7th instant General Komaroff arrived at Old Sarakhs. The Governor of this place went out to meet him in state, and the compliment was returned by a visit from the General on the following day, when he was invited to breakfast, and treated with much ceremony. He was accompanied by Colonel Alikhanoff, 9 other Russian officers, 9 Téké Khans, 100 Cossacks, 50 Téké horsemen.

The escort remained outside the fort, which the General entered with his Russian suite and the Téké Khans. A regiment of Persian soldiers was drawn up outside the town to receive him, and a band of music played during the whole time of his visit. In the course of conversation General Komaroff asked the Governor when the English Commissioners were expected, and was told on the following day.

General Komaroff also asked other questions as to their intentions and probable movements. He was told by the Governor that the other Commissioners would soon

* Dengli has the same signification as Burj.—A.F.

arrive at Kuhsan by way of Herat, with an Afghan escort, to which the General replied that the Russian Commissioners would also shortly arrive at Merv. The Governor then asked General Komaroff whether the Russians had taken possession of Yuletan, and was informed by the General that, on his arrival at Merv, he meant to send out a large force of cavalry for that purpose. On his departure General Komaroff gave presents in money to the Persian guards, and exchanged gifts with the Governor.

Sir Peter Lumsden arrived here on the 9th instant, escorted by Veli Mohamad Khan Jemsheedi with 150 cavalry. This officer had arrived from Herat by way of Gulran Kari Elias and Noroozabad, at which latter place he had come up with the English Commissioners. The Governor went out to meet them with 300 horsemen, and received them with great honour. A regiment with music playing was drawn up to receive them at the entrance to the town, the Baghi Shah was assigned to them as a residence, and sentinels were posted at the gates for their protection.

On the 10th instant Sir Peter Lumsden and his suite, escorted by Veli Mohamad Khan, started for Kuhsan by way of Toman Agha, Geman Bihisht, and Noroozabad.

No. 166.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 5, 1885.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 30, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of a paper which was recently read at a meeting of the Russian Geographical Society by M. Lessar, respecting the annexation of Merv, and the Turkoman tribes inhabiting the country on the frontier of Afghanistan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 166.

Paper read by M. Lessar at a Meeting of the Russian Geographical Society.

(Translation from the Russian.)

AT a meeting of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society held at St. Petersburgh on the 5th (17th) December, 1884, M. Lessar read the following paper on the occupation of Merv, and the Turkomans inhabiting the country on the borders of Afghanistan:—

"After the storming and capture of Geok-tépé, the majority of the population of the Merv Oasis became fully aware that it would be impossible to maintain the old order of things, and of this they were convinced more especially after the visit made by their Khans to Moscow for witnessing the coronation. These Khans and the majority of their tribesmen were fully conscious that any attempt on their part to struggle against Russia would be hopeless. Notwithstanding this pacific tendency, there still were to be found in Merv several hundred inveterate robbers who continued to pillage and to commit acts of violence in the surrounding steppe. When during the summer of 1883 robber raids became frequent again, alarm spread through the whole steppe; and when in the autumn of the same year these marauding expeditions assumed great proportions, the pacific inhabitants of the oasis notified to the Russian authorities at Askabad that numerous robber bands had issued forth from Merv in every direction. Even in Merv itself signs of insecurity of life and property began to show themselves. In a word, complete anarchy was approaching. This state of things induced the peacefully-inclined inhabitants to seek some issue out of their impossible position. Some of them were preparing to emigrate, while others proceeded to Askabad to obtain permission to settle near Old Sarakhs and Kary-Bend. The dispatch of a Russian detachment into the steppe in the autumn of 1883 at once produced a good effect. The pacific party of Merv gained the ascendency, and a deputation was sent to express the amicable disposition of the people towards Russia. Lastly, a majority of the influential Elders of Merv betook themselves to Askabad with the object of placing themselves and their oasis under Russian protection. When the Emperor allowed this protection to be extended to them, four of the

principal Khans and twenty-four of the leading men of Merv swore allegiance to the White Czar.

"The detachment sent from Kary-Bend for the occupation of the oasis reached Merv without encountering opposition, notwithstanding the rumour that its approach would meet with hostility. Some slight resistance was attempted, but only by a small knot of malcontents. Their numbers swelled and diminished in turn, showing great vacillation.

"The opposition might have assumed a serious character had the detachment met with any mishap. Nothing occurred, however, to imperil its position, so that after three insignificant exchanges of shots on the 4th (16th) March, 1884, the Russian troops proceeded to erect a fortification near Koshut-Khan-Kala. The loss on the Russian side was confined to one soldier killed. In such manner was the annexation of Merv to Russia effected.

"The occupation of Merv enabled M. Lessar to gain acquaintance with the Settlements of Saryks along the Murghab River, and to complete his exploration of the south-western portion of the Turkoman country, which he had commenced in 1882.

"The second portion of M. Lessar's paper was devoted to a general description of this region.

"South-western Turkomania lies between the Murghab and Heri-Rud Rivers, extending from north to south for a distance of 250 versts (167 miles), and from west to east over 100 versts (67 miles). The Borkhut Mountains, stretching along the southern portion of the region, and forming a continuation of the Sefid-Kuh range, are separated from the latter by an inconsiderable depression; here the whole chain consists of a series of low hills, through which pass several convenient roads. Farther westward, approaching the Heri-Rud, the Borkhut Mountains attain an altitude of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet, but even there several passes over the range occur. At about 36° north latitude the clay Elbaryn-Kyr Mounds extend from the Heri-Rud almost due east, and divide South-western Turkomania into two parts, differing from each other in character of country and climate. The portion situated south of these mounds presents an undulating surface. The soil is throughout sandy-argillaceous and overgrown with high grass and prickly shrubs. Stretches of sand occur but seldom, and their area is not extensive. The northern parts of the country from Elbaryn-Kyr resemble at first the southern part, but farther northwards the hillocks gradually diminish in height, and sand-plains occur at more frequent intervals, until at last the country assumes the appearance of a sandy desert, like that of the Kara-Kum.

"Two large rivers run through South-western Turkomania, the Heri-Rud and Murghab. The sources of the first are to be found at a distance of 350 versts (233 miles) to the eastward of Herat, at the point of junction of the Sefid-Kuh and Sia-Kuh Mountains. Near Kussan, the last Afghan Settlement on the Heri-Rud, the river turns in a northerly direction, flowing through a defile which divides the Borkhut and Kargala Mountains. The land bordering the river is not in all places capable of cultivation, as occasionally it rises in the direction of the river and forms considerable elevations, rendering irrigation impossible. A considerable body of water is to be found in the river only from the commencement of January to the end of the month of March. A current ceases to run in the river about the beginning of August in that portion of the river which is north of Kiafyr-Kale, but it again begins to run where the Kara-Su falls into it. The level of the water rises again in November and December. Northward from Sarakhs the Heri-Rud is called the Tedjend; here it also dries up during the summer, pools of water only occurring here and there along its bed. The Murghab takes its rise on the northern slope of the Sefid-Kuh, and reaches the plain in the neighbourhood of Bala-Murghab. The banks of the river consist mostly of mounds which in some places border the river itself. At the junction of the Murghab with the Kushka the valley of the river expands, and the Penjdeh Oasis occurs at this point. Farther northwards a narrow zone of land, formerly under cultivation, borders the river. High water in the river is to be found in spring and early summer. The banks of the Murghab afford greater advantages for settlement than those of the Heri-Rud, and the occupation of only three points along its course is attributable to marauding Turkoman raids. The affluents of the Murghab are the Kush, Kash, and Kaisor.

"The climate of the northern part of South-western Turkomania resembles that of the Kara-Kum sands; in the southern portion of the region a strong south wind blows almost without intermission; according to the testimony of the natives good weather is never met with here.

"The trees which grow along the banks of the rivers consist of the poplar,

mulberry, willow (*Salix caprea*), various shrubs also occur. The southern half of the South-western Turkoman country is much poorer in vegetation; good pasturage ground is only to be found near the rivers; in the northern portion, on the contrary, especially where the sandy soil commences, the grass is of good quality, affording, even after it has been scorched, in summer good food for cattle.

"The interior of South-western Turkomania presents but few localities available for agriculture, but on the other hand very good pasturage ground is to be found.

"The Settlements of the Saryks and Salors spread along the Murghab and Heri-Rud. The Saryks who occupy the Yol-Otan and Penjdeh Oases along the Murghab are divided into five branches. The mode of administration of these oases was the same as that which prevailed at Merv, *i.e.*, every one was at liberty to do as he pleased. It was only in extreme cases, when it became necessary to adopt some measure affecting the whole oasis, that Councils of the Aksakals or Elders prevailed. The power exercised by the Khans was always insignificant. The Saryks estimate their numbers at 20,000 kibitkas, but probably this computation is an exaggeration, the real numbers being about 12,000 kibitkas. Of this population, about 4,000 inhabit Yol-Otan, the remainder being settled at Penjdeh, along the Rivers Kushka, Kasha, and Kaisora. A few Jews live among the Saryks. The latter differ but little from the Tékés in their habits, occupations, and mode of life. They all live in felt tents, in Settlements consisting of from 30 to 100 tents which are pitched in open places. Owing to the great development of cattle breeding, the Saryks live in comparative plenty. Their dress is very similar to that of other Turkoman tribes. The women wear trousers and shirts chiefly of blue colour, and their head-dress consists of a thick felt cap half enveloped in thin muslin, forming a turban, the ends of which fall behind to the waist, as also in front, serving as a covering for the chin. The principal occupations of the Saryks consist of agriculture and cattle breeding. The latter pursuit is more developed among them than among any of the other tribes, notwithstanding that the insecurity of the country has prevented them from availing themselves of distant pasturage grounds. Their herds are not guarded by shepherds, but by concealed parties of watchmen, who look out for marauding bands and give notice of their approach. Agriculture is in a worse condition, as nothing grows without irrigation, and the construction of works of irrigation is attended with difficulty. As the requirements of the Sarkys are few and simple, their trade is insignificant. Yol-Otan is supplied from Bokhara with cotton prints and other tissues, with wrought iron, cast iron, kettles, tea, and silk; from Herat the Saryks obtain tea and silk tissues, sweetmeats, and indigo, which they export to Bokhara and Khiva. Their chief exports consist of sheep for the markets of Bokhara and of horses and camels for Herat. In addition to this, the Saryks sell carpets of their own manufacture, also felting and tissues of camels' hair.

"The Salors are divided into three tribes; they live near Old Sarakhs, along the Murghab, at Chardjui, Maimene, and near Herat. Owing to their having repeatedly been despoiled by other tribes, the Salors at present are very poor; they possess but few tents, and live mostly in huts made of reeds. They have hardly any cattle, and are chiefly employed in husbandry. Towards the end of the eighth decade of the last century, after the destruction of Merv by the Emir of Bokhara, the country along the course of the Murghab was occupied by the Saryks. Between 1820-30 they were subject to the Khan of Khiva, but afterwards rebelled against his authority. Lastly, during the period of 1850-60, the Tékés, oppressed by the Persians, seized Merv, driving out the Saryks, who settled at Penjdeh.

"About the year 1830 the Salors were still encamped in the neighbourhood of Old Sarakhs, but in 1832 the Persians took this place by storm, and pillaged it; the inhabitants who escaped slaughter were ransomed by the Khan of Khiva. The spoliation of the Salors was so complete that when the Saryks, twenty-five years later, took possession of their lands, they were unable to make any opposition, and migrated to Zurabad, in Persia, from whence they afterwards betook themselves to Merv. In 1881 they again partly returned to Old Sarakhs, and partly settled near Zurabad."

St. Petersburgh, December 29, 1884.

No. 167.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 5, 1885.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 31, 1884.

I CALLED upon M. de Giers this afternoon, and asked him what opinion he had formed of the contents of the note which your Lordship had addressed to the Russian Ambassador in London on the 23rd instant respecting the proposed zone for the operations of the Afghan Boundary Commissioners. His Excellency replied that he had not received from M. de Staal a copy of a note such as I had described. All that had reached him some days ago was a telegram, in which M. de Staal had stated that I should be instructed to make to M. de Giers a communication in the above sense, and that he had consequently been expecting that communication.

I informed M. de Giers that your Lordship had merely transmitted to me a copy of the note in question, but had not instructed me to make any statement to his Excellency with regard to it, which indeed did not seem to be necessary.

M. de Giers said that he had yesterday waited upon the Emperor at Gatchina, and had informed His Majesty of the contents of M. de Staal's telegram. On the supposition, however, that his Excellency would hear from me on the subject, His Majesty had not given any orders with regard to the answer which should be returned to your Lordship's note. He had, however, expressed the opinion that unless a definite zone were decided upon, the meeting of the Commissioners would be unproductive of any advantage.

M. de Giers told me that his own feeling was that it would be a great misfortune if the Commission were to fail to come to an agreement as to the line of boundary. But concurring, as he did, in the opinion expressed by His Imperial Majesty, he still hoped that the two Governments might agree to narrow ("rétrécir") the extent of the zone as originally proposed by the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 168.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 8, 3 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, December* 27.

IT is reported from Meshed that twenty-four guns with ammunition have passed up from Askabad to Merv. It is stated at Penjdeh that Russians have occupied Gumesli, between Pul-i-Khatun and Penjdeh. This latter report is not yet confirmed, but, if true, it is very serious, as at Russians' request Afghans refrain from acting, and in case of Russia withdrawing from Demarcation Commission it will make settlement of line with Afghans very difficult. It is essential to have positive answer from St. Petersburgh as to whether General Zelenoi will be at Sarakhs on 27th January. If Russians continue advancing, and Commissioner fails to meet me in January, it will be impossible to come to any arrangement.

No. 169.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, January* 12, 1885, 3·40 P.M.

FOLLOWING telegram received from Sir P. Lumsden:—

[See No. 168.]

It is of urgent importance to induce Russian Government to hasten General Zelenoi's departure, and absolutely to prohibit any further military movements in the direction of the proposed boundary until a decision has been come to by the Joint Commission. The terms and manner of making representations on these points to the Emperor and M. de Giers are left to your Excellency's discretion.

No. 170.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 14, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, in talking this afternoon with M. de Giers upon the Afghan boundary question, M. de Giers told me that he would not be able, for some days to come, to send an answer to your note of the 23rd ultimo to the Russian Ambassador in London; but I gathered from what he said that it will propose a certain boundary line, which the Commission would be subsequently charged to trace and lay down, following the course which was observed in the case of the Boundary Commissions appointed under the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. His Excellency also thought it would be advisable to define such a line in a Treaty.

I took the opportunity strongly to urge upon him that positive orders should be given that the Russian troops should make no further advance in the disputed territory, and that General Zelenoi should be directed to join Sir Peter Lumsden without any delay.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 171.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, January* 16, 1885, 7 P.M.

IN a telegram of the 14th instant Sir E. Thornton reported that he had just strongly urged M. de Giers that General Zelenoi should join you without delay, and that Russian troops should make no advance in the disputed territory.

No. 172.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 14, 1885.

IT was not till the evening of the 4th instant that M. de Giers received from the Russian Ambassador in London a copy of the note which your Lordship addressed to his Excellency on the 23rd ultimo, relating to the zone proposed by the Russian Government for the operations of the Commission on the north-west boundary of Afghanistan. M. de Giers at once requested some of the persons more especially interested in this subject to meet him on the following day at his office. Amongst those who were present at this meeting were Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, the Governor-General of the Caucasus; General Vannovsky, the Minister of War; and the Engineer, M. Lessar, who is also a member of the Boundary Commission.

I subsequently asked M. de Giers what had been the result of this meeting. He said that it had been agreed on all sides that it was absolutely indispensable that a definite zone should be decided upon before the Commissioners could begin operations.

M. de Giers added that he feared it would be some days before he could send an answer to your Lordship's note of the 23rd ultimo; he still hoped that an agreement could be arrived at to narrow (he again used the word "rétrécir") the zone from the southern limit which had been proposed, but he admitted that he found great opposition to his wishes on this point.

The more I discuss the matter with his Excellency, the more I am impressed with his sincerity and his desire for the successful issue of the labours of the Commission. But he finds it very difficult to overcome the obstacles which are perpetually thrown in his way; and the delay which is so unfortunate principally arises from the time required to convert his opponents to his views. As the matter now stands, however, I do not believe that either the Emperor or his Excellency will agree to the work being begun, or even to General Zelenoi's joining Her Majesty's Commission, until the extent of the zone of operations is defined.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 173.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 19.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 15, 1885.

AFTER writing my despatch of yesterday's date, I called upon M. de Giers, who at once expressed his regret that it would be some days before he would be able to send an answer to your Lordship's note to M. de Staal of the 23rd ultimo. I then told him that delay would, I feared, be likely to diminish the chances of the successful performance of the duties intrusted to the Boundary Commission. There were disagreeable rumours that Russian troops were advancing and occupying positions which were considered by the Ameer of Afghanistan to be within his territory, and that I had been instructed by your Lordship to urge upon his Excellency, and upon His Imperial Majesty, the importance of no advance whatever being made while the question of the boundary was still pending. I added that I did not doubt that General Zelenoi, in accordance with the engagement already made by the Imperial Government, would be at Sarakhs, or wherever else he could conveniently meet Sir Peter Lumsden, on the 27th instant, but that it would be most desirable, and indeed of the utmost importance, that he should proceed to join his colleagues without any delay whatever.

M. de Giers assured me that there was no foundation for any statement that Russian troops had made, or were making, any advance, or were taking possession of points within Afghan territory.

With regard to the date of General Zelenoi's departure to join the Commission, his Excellency said that that question would be answered in the reply to your Lordship's note, and I was unable to extract from him anything more definite upon this point. But in answer to my endeavours to persuade him of the disastrous consequences which might arise from further delay, he expressed the hope that the proposal which he trusted he would be able to make would be satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government. From observations which he subsequently made, I gathered that it was the intention of the Russian Government to propose a definite line for the north-western boundary of Afghanistan, which the Commissioners should subsequently trace and lay down, as had been done, his Excellency observed, with respect to the Boundary Commissions appointed under the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. He went on to say that he believed it would even be advisable to conclude a Treaty or Convention in which the boundary line should be defined. By this means he hoped that there would never be any danger of disputes or conflicts. He gave me no precise idea as to where the proposed line would be, except by saying that as Herat seemed to be the point with regard to which the people of England were most sensitive, he hoped that he should succeed in obtaining that the line should be at a sufficient distance from that place.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 174.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 21, 1885.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 15th instant, informing me of the conversation you had had with M. de Giers with regard to the movements of the Russian forces in the direction of the Afghan boundary, and the importance of General Zelenoi being instructed to join Sir Peter Lumsden without delay.

The language which you held to his Excellency, as therein reported, is approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 175.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 23, 1885.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 22nd November, transmitting a copy of the correspondence which passed between the Ameer of Afghanistan and yourself relative to your appointment as British Commissioner for the demarcation of the Afghan boundary; and I have to state that the terms of your letter to the Ameer are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 176.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 23, 1885.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 21st November, forwarding a copy of correspondence relating to Russian advances on the Murghab; and I approve the terms of the communications addressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway and yourself to the Ameer's Representative on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 177.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received January 24, 4·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, January* 2, 1885.

THERE is no truth in report of Russian occupation of Gumesli.

No. 178.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, January 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 28, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that M. de Giers told me this afternoon that he intended to send instructions to-morrow to M. de Staal to propose to you to negotiate with him a line of boundary which should be subsequently laid down by the Commission, and, if your Lordship should agree to this proposal, to embody the result in a Convention.

His Excellency further informed me that the Russian engineer, M. Lessar, would start to-morrow for London, for the purpose of helping M. de Staal by furnishing him local information.

M. de Giers would not give me any details with regard to the exact line which would be proposed, except by saying that it would never come nearer to Herat than at least 120 versts, or about 80 miles.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 179.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received January 31, 1885.)

(Extract.) *Bala Murghab, December* 18, 1884.

ON my arrival at Kuhsan on the 21st November, I found my escort from India had on the previous day arrived there, along with Colonel Ridgeway, Assistant Boundary Commissioner, who had had charge of the whole party on its march of

767 miles from Quetta, in which it had overcome great difficulties presented by the traversing of a desert in the heat of September, the passage of the Helmund River, and of the country from Lash Jowain to Subzawar, where for the first time the natives had seen Indian troops.

I met also Kazi Saad-ud-din Khan, a fully-accredited Agent from the Ameer at Cabul, to submit to me His Highness' views on matters connected with the demarcation of the Afghan frontier, and to be the channel of communication with local Governors and Chiefs, as also Muhamad Sarwar Khan, the Governor of Herat.

Great anxiety existed amongst those authorities regarding the advance of the Russians to Pul-i-Khatum, and also the immediate threat of a like advance towards Pul-i-Khisti, on the Murghab River. It appeared that on the 18th November General Ghaus-ud-din Khan, commanding in Panjdeh, received intimation that a Russian General (Komaroff), with 300 horsemen, from the east; and Colonel Alikhanoff, commanding at Merv, with 150 horsemen, from Merv, had formed a juncture at Hazrat Imam, some 52 miles from Panjdeh, and were advancing on that place. On the 20th they had reached Aimak Chari, within 12 miles of Ak-Tappa, in Panjdeh, where Ghaus-ud-din Khan was posted, with two guns, 400 regular infantry, and some 100 cavalry. From this place General Komaroff suddenly returned towards Merv, while Colonel Alikhanoff continued his advance, sending on a trooper to inform Ghaus-ud-din Khan of his desire for an interview.

The General was suspicious of Russian intentions—and not without reason—for, apparently, this was the third attempt since the beginning of September to secure a footing in the valley; the first being an officer with four Turkomans, who called himself Hakim Rustum (supposed to be Dr. Regel), who seems, under the plea of hunting for medical herbs, to have wandered about the valleys for a fortnight before being required to leave by orders of the Governor of Herat; the second, by one Bilkonah, who lately came to Sanduk-Kuchan, with five Russian troopers, but was ordered back from the Afghan outpost, notwithstanding his innocent desire to be allowed to plant the Russian flag there!

Under the circumstances, General Ghaus-ud-din, as related by himself, sent a reply that he should have received formal intimation of such a proposed meeting, before Alikhanoff left Yulatan, and, moreover, that he should have come escorted by only some five or ten horsemen, and instructed him to wait where he was, and that he would meet him there. However, as Alikhanoff would not halt, but insisted on coming on, he informed him that any further advance would be at his peril. Upon this, Alikhanoff halted for the night within a few miles of the General's position, and on the next morning, after waiting for a reply to a most insulting and provocative letter, retraced his steps towards Merv.

That reply, together with Alikhanoff's letter which provoked it, is attached for information.

On the first appearance of this cavalry force, the post at Ak-Tappa was reinforced and increased to two guns, 800 infantry and 300 horsemen, whilst the General called for further support from Herat, and pressed that some British officer should join him to arrange matters with the Russians. On being appealed to for advice, knowing that the Russians at the present time dare not draw men from their weak force at Merv, or risk a defeat by the Afghans, which would assuredly have aroused the whole Téké population in their rear, I considered that no reinforcements were necessary, and that if the General acted with caution and judgment and did on no account provoke hostility, but firmly maintained his post, the Russians, on realizing the Ameer's position and established Government in Panjdeh, would retire.

At the same time, I considered it advisable to proceed with a limited escort of fifty horsemen to visit Panjdeh, whilst the remainder of my escort marched by an inner line towards Bala Murghab. I reached Kara Tappa, the first inhabited Saruk encampment on the 27th November, and marched down the Khushk to Pul-i-Khisti and Ak-Tappa, near its juncture with the Murghab River.

Ak-Tappa is a natural mound in the centre of the valley with a command of some 100 feet above the surrounding country, but itself commanded from heights across the Murghab at a distance of some 1,200 yards. It has at some time been built over and used as a fort, and the Afghan troops were busy at work entrenching the whole position, which is a strong one except against artillery.

I was received at Ak-Tappa, which covers the northern approaches to Panjdeh, by Yaluntush Khan, Chief of the Jamshedis, and by his brother Aminullah Khan, Governor of Panjdeh, together with the Chiefs and Elders of the Saruk Turkomans, and by General Ghaus-ud-din Khan at the head of his troops. The salute fired in my

honour was evidently the first that had for many days re-echoed through these valleys, and seemed to astonish the population.

The control exercised by the Ameer over this valley is complete and accepted by the Sariks, who willingly respond to such a call for revenue as will meet the tithes to the clergy, the payment of the Governor and Elders, and compensation to certain Sardars (leaders of raids), who, from the altered state of society, are now out of employ. These taxes are assessed on canals and flocks, and are of the lightest description, amounting altogether to some 30,000 krans (1,250*l.*).

Considering the present as a crisis in the affairs of this valley, I took the opportunity of impressing on Kazi Saad-ud-din Khan and the Governor of Herat, the necessity, in the interests of the Ameer, of treating these people with the greatest leniency and securing their good-will.

In reply to the Governor as to the advisability of garrisoning Ak-Tappa with 300 militia and cavalry, while the reserves remained near at Maruchak and Bala Murghab, I informed him that the question was one with which I had no concern; but that under all circumstances the Commander should be a selected man of prudence, who, whilst securing the confidence and co-operation of the Saruks, would be competent, in case of meeting Russian outposts, to act in a becoming manner, and not commit his Government; that the power of the Ruler should be in the good-will and co-operation of the tribe, who, with good treatment, would be his mainstay and immediate support; that the men which they could turn out ought to be a host in themselves, and always ready to support the post, and, in case of necessity, hold their own until arrival of regular troops, with whom they could co-operate.

Badghis has been, as far back as even the earliest periods of Arabic history, a province of, or connected with, Herat. It comprises the lands watered by the Murghab River, including the Kushk and all other tributaries, together with grazing lands extending to the Heri-Rud River on the west, and to a day's journey for flocks to the east of the Murghab. In earlier times it included Yulatan, but since the time of Khivan supremacy, when the cities were destroyed, the tract of cultivation between Panjdeh and Yulatan has remained fallow, and, beyond the traces of early canals, presents no vestige of former occupation and has become desert.

Panjdeh is the principal valley of Badghis, and may be described as that portion of it watered by an extensive system of canals, which formerly issued from the dam known as the Bundi Nadir, some 8 miles north of Maruchuk, on the Murghab River. This stream, however, having changed its bed, and removed itself to the other side of the valley, five main dams, some of them as high up as Maruchuk, now raise the waters for deliverance in the lands of the principal divisions of the Saruk tribe throughout the district.

The Murghab is a beautiful river, flowing in deep beds of alluvial deposit, with a width of some 60 to 80 yards, and only fordable at this season in a few places.

Panjdeh extends from Karaul Khana to Ak-Tuppa, a distance of 42 miles, with an average width of from 2 to 3 miles, and is the continuation of the Valley of Bala Murghab, which extends southwards for some 18 miles further. The soil is of the most fertile description, and produces luxurious crops of all descriptions. The Saruks in every direction are busy in agricultural pursuits, repairing their canals, &c.; and, with the exception of a follower or two with the Chiefs, were unarmed, and presented the appearance of a very well-to-do, industrious peasantry. The high road from Ak-Tuppa (which is said to be 80 or 90 miles from Yulatan) to Herat is not up the Valley of the Murghab, but along the Khusk by the old caravan road, by an easy gradient along the river 63 miles to Kara Bagh, and some 50 miles more by the Bandi Baba Pass to Herat. It is a perfectly easy road, affording no obstructions along the whole route from Merv to Herat.

At the present time an army would have to carry provisions throughout the march, but the soil of the Khusk Valley is excellent, and was evidently well cultivated in former days, and studded with villages and towns, and every exertion is being made by the present Ameer to colonize the valley.

In moving from Kuhsan to Panjdeh we crossed the Chashma Sabz Pass, which was a very easy one, and would take but little labour to make it practicable for the passage of artillery. In fact, the watershed immediately north-west of Herat can be crossed by very many easy passes between Khusk and the Heri-Rud.

The Ameer has re-established the fort of Gulran, and proposes to put it into thorough repair. The position is, strategically, a very important one.

After due consultation with the Ameer's authorities, I have determined to establish my winter quarters here, where I have joined my escort, and everything has been pro-

vided for my comfort and provision. The position is a convenient one from whence to watch events at Panjdeh, secure information regarding the frontier onwards towards Maimena and Andhkoi, and to proceed to Sarakhs so soon as I may be assured that the Russian Commissioner will be prepared to meet me there. In the meantime, our survey parties are busily engaged in mapping the country in all directions, for which every facility has been afforded; and shall continue to do so unless driven in by stress of weather.

Inclosure 1 in No. 179.

Colonel Alikhanoff to General Ghaus-ud-din Khan.

November 21, 1884.

GHAUS-UD-DIN peruse this letter.

I have heard that you are an Afghan General and that you have authority in Panjdeh. I considered you my equal, and according to the orders of my General, I came to you to settle a few important points, as is always the custom of Governments. You delayed me, and from fear you believed me to be your enemy. I came here as an Envoy with the intention of stopping at Pul-i-Khishti and negotiating with you. I complied, however, with your request and stopped in the plain before reaching Pul-i-Khishti. From noon till evening I was looking out for you, but you did not come and your promise became a lie. You were afraid, and you had not the courage to come. After that I found it necessary to wait. In order to carry out the General's instructions, I now have to inform you that at the time when Russia had not yet taken possession of Merv no Afghan had entered Panjdeh. Because we, Russians, took possession of Merv, you occupied Panjdeh. We have recently heard that you daily send your patrols to this side of Imam, but before long the Commissioners of the two Governments will distribute the lands and settle the frontier. It will then become evident to whom the country belongs. Until the frontier has been delimitated your outposts should not go beyond Urush Tashan, nor will our posts go beyond Oimak Jari. If you do not listen to this, and if you come one step forward, our troops will advance to Pul-i-Khishti. God knows what then will happen. It will all be your fault. Acquaint your superiors with what I have written. You sent me Alour Khan at night informing me that you would meet me at sunrise. I waited for three hours, but you did not come. You became a liar.

Inclosure 2 in No. 179.

General Ghaus-ud-din Khan to Colonel Alikhanoff.

November 22, 1884.

ALI KHAN may see this letter.

I have perused your letter. I also thought you, Ali Khan, were Governor of Merv, and were appointed by the Emperor of Russia. When I saw your actions and movements I found they were not in accordance with the rules of Governments. If you had come on a mission by the order of your Government you ought to have informed me of this from Yulatan, so that I might have met you officially, and might have had conversation with you. But you came with 100 sowars, and the General with a cavalry regiment to Aimak Chari, and gave me no notice. I was, therefore, obliged to prepare for the fight. Passing Aimak Chari you sent the General back to Hazrat Imam. When you found me ready for the fight you gave out that you were an Envoy and sent a man to me with a message that as you and I were frontier officials of two Governments you wanted to see me and then to return.

I sent you a message that you should wait where you were and not come in the middle of the Islam troops; that I would come out and see you in the plain, and would then return to our troops. You paid no attention to my message and commenced advancing. Your acts were all like those of robbers. Thank God you have returned. It is my good fortune that I did not come face to face with you. You wrote that the Commissioners of the two Governments were coming, and that until their arrival our sowars should not go beyond Orush Toshan. Now I reply that until the arrival of the Commissioners who are to define the frontier, you should not send your men one pace this side of Kala Broon, of Imam, as this is Afghan territory. The Afghans are careless, and are not like the Turkomans. I am afraid lest any harm

may befall you, and we may be blamed by the Powers. Your Government is a great one, but your acts are like the thieves. I have informed you of this, because it is necessary to give warning. You also wrote that we occupied Panjdeh when you entered Merv. From this it appears that everything you say and do is wrong, Panjdeh and the Uzbuk country is Afghanistan soil. The Saruks occupied Merv first, and then they became dependents of the Afghans. They have seen and still see favours from the God-granted Government, and they are now part of the Afghans. This is a well-known fact. Only five days ago you came to Merv. You should better inquire from the Tékés at Yulatan so that you may be well informed. The Government officials know the state of every country As you know nothing of this you do not deserve Merv. But if you know this, it was not proper for you, a Government official, to say a lie.

No. 180.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received January* 31, 1885.)

My Lord, *Bala Murghab, December* 19, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, a copy of papers regarding the Russian advance on the Murghab.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 180.

The Governor of Herat to Kazi Saad-ud-din Khan.

(Extract.) *November* 23, 1884.

WITH regard to the Panjdeh affair, I beg to inform you that I have received a letter, dated the 20th November, from the General, to the effect that Ali Khan, Governor of Merv, has left Sanduk Kuchan with 300 Russians for Panjdeh, and that the General has distributed cartridges among his troops. The officers in Murghab have also asked for troops. Their letter I send herewith.

Please inform them (the British officers) immediately of the contents of the General's letter, as well as of the contents of the letter sent by the Murghab officials. If they give permission, some footmen will be sent to Panjdeh soon.

Inclosure 2 in No. 180.

General Ghaus-ud-din Khan and Aminulla Khan to the Governor of Herat.

November 20, 1884.

TO-DAY, in the afternoon, the servants of Aminulla Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan Silmiski came and gave information that the Russian General came with 150 sowars from the east of the river, and Ali Khan with another party of 150 sowars from the west of the river to Sanduk Kuchan, and they are coming on. We have also given cartridges, &c., to the troops. They will attack on Friday night. I have given you the information. So long as we have cartridges so long we will fight.

Inclosure 3 in No. 180.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Kazi Saad-ud-din Khan.

Kuhsan, November 23, 1884.

I HAVE received the Governor of Herat's letter to your address, dated the 23rd instant. I have, after careful consideration, formed the opinion that there is no cause for serious anxiety on your part. The Russian party in question has probably come to Sanduk Kuchan to see after the supplies stored there, and it is even possible that they may go up the river as far as Sari Yazi. It is, however, impossible that Russian soldiers should attack an Afghan garrison in time of peace, and they will

doubtless withdraw when they are warned by your outposts that the place is occupied by you. But your officers, while assuming a firm attitude, should be very courteous in their language, and should abstain from any hostile action unless really attacked. If the Afghan troops are attacked they would certainly be justified in assuming that the enemy were lawless marauders whatever else they might pretend to be; certainly not Russian troops acting under the orders of the Emperor. Under such circumstances the attack should be repelled.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 4 in No. 180.

Panjdeh News.

ON the 25th Muharram (14th November) a person who came from Merv stated that Ali Khan sent for the Headmen of Tékés before he left for Sárakhs, and told them that he was going to Sarakhs, where, he said, the Russian General would meet the British Commissioner; that either peace would be made or war would be declared; and that he hoped that if they (the Tékés) did not join them they would not fight against them.

General Ghaus-ud-din Khan is encamped, with two guns and 300 soldiers, near Ak Tappa, on the bank of the river. The sound of the bugle is heard in the mornings and evenings.

The Sariks are satisfied, and are anxious to see their boundary defined. They have no love for the Russians, especially the Sokhti clan, who are well off, and whose cattle graze in the neighbourhood of Herat.

Since two or three days there is a rumour among the Sariks of Panjdeh that on the arrival of the Afghans the Russians have fled. At first the Afghans who came with the Afghan General kept themselves aloof, but now they are mixing with them (? the Turkomans).

Three days ago news was received in Panjdeh that the Arsari Turkomans had left Charjui.

Continued 3rd Safar (November 22).

Ali Khan, accompanied by 100 Russian sowars and some Turkomans, came as far as a farsakh and a-half from Panjdeh. At two or three places the frontier Afghan officials asked him not to go on, but he paid no attention to them, and said that he wanted to have a conversation with the Afghan General and then to return. His real object was to come to Panjdeh. The Afghan General then sent a message to the effect that he was coming out to meet him, but Ali Khan would not stop, and said that if he was to be killed he would not wait. At last Aminulla Khan sent a letter to him, to the effect that he would not consent to his coming to Panjdeh, and that he would fight him if he proceeded further; and he wanted something in writing from him to show that Ali Khan was in fault.

On receipt of this letter Ali Khan sent a very objectionable letter to General Ghaus-ud-din, to which the latter replied.

On receiving the news of Ali Khan's advance towards Panjdeh, General Ghaus-ud-din and Aminulla Khan sent for assistance to Maimena, Murghab, and Meruchak. On the 22nd November 200 infantry soldiers arrived in Panjdeh, and several men took off their hats and danced in front of them with drawn swords, through joy. They were glad that they were going to become Ghazis next day.

Yalantosh Khan also arrived there the same day, with 200 Jamshidi sowars, who had also brought 200 infantry soldiers on their horses.

News has been received from Yolatan that before Ali Khan came towards Panjdeh he was assured by Sari Khan that the Sariks would receive him with honour, and that they were in favour of Russia; but Ali Khan was disappointed on his coming to Panjdeh.

Ali Khan, on his return, left seven camel-loads of bhoosa and five camel-loads of lucerne at Arsh Doshan, and left for Imam, where General Komaroff is. He has built a good bridge on the Yolatan River.

Last night a caravan consisting of fifty or sixty camel-loads of flour, barley, and wheat arrived in Panjdeh, and the people said that the General at Imam was very anxious to buy these things from them, but that they did not sell them. The bridge which is built is opposite to Imam.

When Ali Khan came none of the Sariks went to him, and they proclaimed that the Russians would come the next day, and asked every able-bodied man to be ready (to fight). The people of Panjdeh showed no love for the Russians. All the Mullas and Kazis of Panjdeh joined Aminulla Khan, and on the arrival of Yalantosh Khan the Sariks came and paid their respects to him. It is all due to the influence of the Jamshidi Khans.

News has been received just now that the General of the Russian army has sent for Ali Khan.

No. 181.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, January* 28, 1885.

WHEN I called upon M. de Giers this afternoon he said that both His Imperial Majesty and himself were convinced that the Commission for laying down the north-west boundary of Afghanistan would arrive at no successful result unless they should be provided with some definite basis upon which to carry on their operations. The Emperor had therefore directed him to instruct the Russian Ambassador in London to propose to your Lordship that the two Governments should endeavour to agree upon a line of boundary which should run from point to point, to be named in the proposal, and should ultimately be marked out in detail on the spot by the Commissioners who have been appointed.

I asked his Excellency whether he would let me know the general course which the line to be proposed would follow; but he begged to be excused from giving any details with regard to it, and merely said that as it appeared that there was a great apprehension on the part of the public in England lest the boundary should be too near to Herat, he could state that the line which would be proposed would at no point be nearer to that town than 120 versts (80 miles).

M. de Giers went on to say that M. de Staal was not well acquainted with the localities in that region, which he had never visited, and that it had therefore been thought expedient to send to England the Russian Engineer, M. Lessar, who had examined it carefully and was well acquainted with it. M. Lessar would not have anything to do personally with the negotiation, if your Lordship should consent to it, but would be there for the purpose of giving information with regard to the localities, if his Excellency should require it. At the same time, M. de Giers suggested that if Her Majesty's Government had no objection, it might be useful that M. Lessar should be allowed to confer upon the subject with any Englishman named by your Lordship who might also be well acquainted with those regions. His Excellency assured me that there existed on the part of the Russian Government the most earnest desire to arrive at an amicable arrangement of the question, and that he had taken care to impress these views upon M. Lessar.

The tendency of M. de Giers' observations seemed to be that whatever the course of the line may be which is now to be proposed, it is put forward as a basis for negotiation, and not as one which could not be modified; for he said that if difficulties should arise during the negotiation, they could be referred here, where he and I could discuss them.

M. Lessar, who will be the bearer of the despatches conveying the above-mentioned instructions to M. de Staal, will start for England to-morrow.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 182.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(*Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, February* 3.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 16 (28) *Janvier*, 1885.

J'AI reçu la dépêche en date du 18 (30) Décembre par laquelle votre Excellence a bien voulu me transmettre copie de la note qui lui a été adressée par le Comte de Granville au sujet de la délimitation de l'Afghanistan.

C'est avec regret que nous avons constaté que le Cabinet de Londres persiste à repousser notre proposition relative à une entente préalable entre les deux Gouverne-

ments sur les limites de la zone de délimitation, sans même préciser les motifs de son refus. Vous avez été à même d'apprécier les circonstances qui nous ont placé dans la nécessité d'insister sur cette condition, laquelle, sans porter la moindre atteinte aux intérêts de la Grande-Bretagne, n'est destinée qu'à nous procurer des garanties indispensables contre une déviation des principes qui ont servi de base aux négociations. Nous ne saurions renoncer à ces garanties en présence des empiétements territoriaux des Afghans, et la réponse de Lord Granville tend à nous en frustrer. Toutes ces considérations sont développées dans la Notice ci-jointe, qui résume la marche des négociations.

Dans ces conditions il est à prévoir que l'envoin de notre Commissionnaire sur les lieux n'aboutirait qu'à un échec. L'intérêt que nous attachons à une solution favorable de la présente question nous impose le devoir d'éviter cette éventualité.

Vous aurez soin de relever ces considérations aux yeux de Lord Granville.

La Notice ci-jointe contient également l'exposé d'une nouvelle proposition que vous êtes autorisé à faire au Cabinet de Londres, pour faire sortir les négociations de l'impasse dans laquelle elles viennent de s'engager. Cette proposition a pour objet une entente entre les deux Cabinets sur la ligne de démarcation dont le tracé,* indiqué dans la Notice, a été combiné en vue des prevéntions qu'inspirerait à l'Angleterre la proximité des nos établissements de la ville de Hérat. Moyennant ce tracé un espace de 110 kilom. environ séparerait cette ville des points les plus rapprochés de la future frontière.

Si les deux Cabinets se mettaient d'accord en principe sur cette direction de la ligne, la tâche des Commissaires respectifs serait simplifiée. Ceux-ci pourraient se rendre sans retard sur les lieux pour procéder au tracé de la frontière.

Je n'ai pas besoin de réitérer à votre Excellence combien nous désirons voir s'établir un accord qui écarterait à l'avenir toute complication et tout malentendu entre les deux Gouvernements, et leur permettrait de placer sur des bases solides les bonnes et amicales relations qui doivent subsister entre eux dans leur propre intérêt comme dans celui de la tranquillité, de l'ordre, et de la civilisation dans ces contrées.

C'est parce que nous y attachons le plus grand prix que nous invitons le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique à entrer avec nous dans un échange d'idées direct, et que nous lui indiquons avec une entière franchise le terrain sur lequel l'entente que nous souhaitons pourrait s'établir.

Vous êtes autorisé à donner lecture et copie de la présente dépêche et de l'Annexe à Lord Granville lorsque vous le jugerez opportun.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, January* 16 (28), 1885.

I HAVE received the despatch dated the 18th (30th) December in which your Excellency was good enough to transmit to me a copy of the note addressed to you by Lord Granville on the subject of the delimitation of Afghanistan.

We regret to learn that the Cabinet of London persists in rejecting our proposal respecting a preliminary understanding between the two Governments as to the limits of the zone of delimitation, without even stating the reasons for their refusal. You are acquainted with the circumstances which have rendered it necessary for us to insist upon this condition, which, without in any way prejudicing the interests of Great Britain, is only intended to provide us with indispensable guarantees against a departure from the principles which have served as the basis for the negotiations. We could not dispense with these guarantees in face of the territorial encroachments of the Afghans, and Lord Granville's answer is calculated to deprive us of them. All these considerations are enlarged upon in the annexed Memorandum, which gives a summary of the progress of the negotiations.

In this state of affairs it is to be expected that the dispatch of our Commissioner to the spot will only result in failure. The importance which we attach to a favourable solution of this question makes it our duty to avoid such an eventuality.

You will be careful to bring these considerations to Lord Granville's knowledge.

The annexed Memorandum also contains the outline of a new proposal which you are authorized to make to the Cabinet of London, in order that the negotiations may escape from the dead-lock at which they have now arrived. The object of this proposal is an understanding between the two Cabinets with regard to the line of demarcation* indicated in the Memorandum, in the tracing of which regard has been

* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 5.

paid to the prejudices which would be aroused in England by the proximity of our posts to the town of Herat. According to this line, a distance of about 110 kilom. would separate that town from the nearest points of the future frontier.

Provided the two Cabinets came to an agreement in principle with regard to the direction of the line, the task of their respective Commissioners would be simplified. They could repair without delay to the localities, for the purpose of proceeding with the demarcation of the frontier.

It is unnecessary for me to repeat to your Excellency how much we wish to see an agreement arrived at which would in the future prevent all complication and all misunderstanding between the two Governments, and would allow of their placing upon a solid basis the good and friendly relations which ought to exist between them, as well in their own interest as in that of tranquillity, order, and civilization in those parts.

Attaching, as we do, the greatest value to such considerations, we invite the Government of Her Britannic Majesty to a direct interchange of ideas with us, and we submit with perfect frankness the basis upon which the understanding we hope for might be established.

You are authorized to read and to give a copy of this despatch and the annex to Lord Granville whenever you think fit.

Accept, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure in No. 182.

Notice.

LE Cabinet Impérial a pris connaissance de la note, en date du 23 Décembre, 1884, que M. le Comte de Granville a cru devoir adresser à l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Londres au sujet de la délimitation de l'Afghanistan.

Le Cabinet Impérial s'étant trouvé dans la nécessité de proposer à celui de Londres de s'entendre d'avance sur une zone de délimitation, le Gouvernement Britannique, ainsi qu'il résulte de la note ci-dessus mentionnée, est tout disposé à admettre que les investigations des Commissaires délimitateurs ne dépassent pas la ligne qui, suivant l'avis du Cabinet Impérial, pourrait être adoptée comme limite septentrionale de la zone en question, mais, d'un autre côté, il ne croit pas possible de procéder à une définition préalable de la limite sud de la même zone. Le Cabinet Britannique ne saurait non plus admettre que Pouli-Khatoum et Pendjdé se trouveraient en dehors des limites de l'Afghanistan, ainsi que le pense le Cabinet Impérial, et il est d'avis que ces questions devraient être résolues par les Commissaires sur les lieux.

La note précitée de M. le Comte de Granville garde le silence sur les raisons qui empêchent le Gouvernement Brittanique d'adopter la proposition du Cabinet Impérial, et elle ne fait pas la moindre allusion aux circonstances et aux considérations qui ont motivé la susdite proposition, et qui ont été exposées en détail dans la note adressée par M. de Giers à l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre en date du 14 Novembre, 1884.

Vu la gravité qui s'attache à ces considérations, le Cabinet Impérial ne saurait s'empêcher d'appeler encore une fois l'attention la plus sérieuse du Gouvernement Britannique sur les motifs qui lui font craindre que, dans les conditions actuelles et à défaut d'une entente préalable sur l'étendue de la zone de délimitation, l'envoi des Commissaires sur les lieux n'aboutisse à un malentendu ou même à un échec dont les conséquences ne sauraient manquer d'exercer une influence défavorable sur la marche ultérieure des négociations.

Dès le début de ces négociations il avait été convenu entre les deux Gouvernements que tous les Arrangements antérieurement conclus au sujet de l'Asie Centrale resteraient en vigueur; dans sa note du 17 Juin, 1884, le Cabinet Impérial s'était fait un devoir de signaler à l'Ambassadeur Britannique que, dans sa pensée, la prochaine délimitation était destinée à compléter celle de 1872-73. Les deux Cabinets convinrent, en outre, que la direction de la ligne de démarcation entre l'Amou-Daria et le Héri-Rud serait combinée de façon à prévenir autant que possible tout motif de malentendus et de complications dans l'avenir. L'état des possessions de l'Émir Schir Ali Khan ayant servi de base à l'Arrangement de 1872-73, c'est cette même base qui devait être adoptée pour la prochaine délimitation, et le Cabinet Impérial a eu soin de préciser dans sa note du 30 Juillet, 1884, que selon son avis les complications

ne pourraient être écartées que dans le cas où la frontière à tracer serait conforme aux conditions géographiques et ethnographiques du territoire à délimiter.

En partant de ce point de vue le Cabinet Impérial s'est fait un devoir de prévenir l'Ambassadeur Britannique qu'il se voyait dans la nécessité de demander que la tribu des Turcomans-Saryks, dont une partie avait déjà fait sa soumission aux autorités Russes, soit comprise tout entière dans la sphère d'action de la Russie, et que l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan renonçât à toute velléité d'extension de son territoire aux dépens des terres habitées par les Turcomans en question.

Quoique le Gouvernement Britannique n'eût pas jugé possible de donner son adhésion à cette proposition, M. de Giers ne crut pas moins de son devoir de prévenir Sir Edward Thornton que le Cabinet Impérial se réservait d'insister sur l'application du programme ci-dessus exposé.

La réalisation de ce programme n'étant possible qu'à condition que l'oasis de Pendjdé, habité par les Saryks, ne fût pas envahi par les Afghans, le Cabinet Impérial n'avait pas manqué de signaler dès le mois de Juin 1884 à l'attention du Gouvernement Britannique les bruits qui prêtaient à l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan l'intention de s'emparer de cette localité. En donnant plus tard son consentement définitif à l'envoi de son Commissaire sur les lieux, il n'a pas cru pouvoir s'empêcher de rappeler à l'Ambassadeur Britannique que les empiétements territoriaux des Afghans ne sauraient manquer de neutraliser les effets des intentions conciliantes des deux Puissances et de créer de graves obstacles à la délimitation (note du 25 Août, 1884).

Au commencement du mois de Septembre le Cabinet Impérial eut le regret de constater que les représentations amicales dont il avait usé auprès du Gouvernement Britannique n'avaient pu prévenir l'envahissement de Pendjdé par les Afghans, et pour empêcher que la délimitation ne s'écartât des principes consacrés en 1872-73, il si vit obligé de proposer à l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre de s'entendre d'avance sur les limites de la zone qui ferait l'objet des investigations des Commissaires respectifs.

La réponse du Foreign Office ne fut reçue au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères que le 5 du mois de Novembre ; tout en reconnaissant l'utilité de la définition d'une zone de délimitation, le Gouvernement Britannique prétendait pourtant que c'était aux Commissaires respectifs qu'il fallait abandonner le soin de régler cette question, et qu'avant de s'entendre à ce sujet avec son collègue de Russie, le Commissaire Anglais était tenu de consulter le Délégué de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan.

Cette réponse n'était point de nature à satisfaire le Cabinet Impérial. N'ayant point à intervenir dans les rapports du Commissaire Anglais avec les autorités Afghanes, le Cabinet Impérial se voyait dans l'impossibilité d'admettre que la nécessité d'explications préalables entre le Général Lumsden et le Délégué de l'Émir puisse servir d'obstacle à une entente directe entre les deux Gouvernements. Cette entente pouvait, selon son avis, éprouver d'autant moins de difficultés, qu'il suffisit de définir les limites de la zone en traits généraux et que cette définition, qui devait évidemment précéder le commencement des travaux de délimitation, ne pouvait s'effectuer que sur la base d'informations recueillies précédemment et qui figuraient déjà sur les cartes existantes.

Dans le but de hâter la solution de la question et persuadé que le bien-fondé des considérations ci-dessus exposées ne pouvait échapper à l'attention du Gouvernement Britannique, le Cabinet Impérial crut devoir transmettre à Sir Edward Thornton un projet de zone dressé par le Général Zélénoï. Ayant pris pour point de départ de la limite nord de la zone Daouletabad, situé à une grande distance des possessions Afghanes, le Commissaire Russe était, d'autre part, d'avis que la limite méridionale de la zone devait suivre la chaîne des hauteurs qui borde au nord la vallée de Hérat et qui, conformément au témoignage du Colonel MacGregor, formait en 1875 la frontière réelle de l'Afghanistan. L'oasis de Pendjdé n'ayant été que tout récemment occupé par les Afghans, cette localité fut comprise dans la zone. Dans la pensée du Cabinet Impérial le travail du Général Zélénoï ne préjugerait point la direction de la future ligne de démarcation, dont le tracé devrait faire l'objet d'une entente ultérieure, soit entre les Commissaires respectifs, soit entre les deux Gouvernements. Ce travail n'était destiné qu'à écarter des contestations éventuelles entre les Commissaires sur l'extension à donner aux travaux de levée et de description et à fournir, en même temps, au Gouvernement Impérial, une garantie que le tracé de la future frontière ne subirait point l'influence des changements territoriaux survenus à la suite des empiétements des Afghans, et que le Commissaire Russe ne serait point empêché de visiter les localités dont l'investigation préalable constituerait un élément essentiel de la future délimitation.

La réponse de M. le Comte de Granville, contenue dans sa note du 23 Décembre dernier, tend à nous frustrer des garanties ci-dessus spécifiées, et à démontrer que dans

les conditions actuelles, la rencontre des Commissaires à Sarakhs ne saurait plus répondre au but que les deux Puissances étaient convenues de poursuivre. Le Commissaire Russe ne pouvait que renouveler auprès de son collègue d'Angleterre la proposition qui vient d'être rejetée par le Gouvernement Britannique, et il y a tout lieu de supposer qui les circonstances qui ont empêché les deux Gouvernements de s'entendre sur les limites de la zone de délimitation ne manqueraient pas de susciter des obstacles insurmontables à un arrangement à ce sujet entre les Commissaires respectifs; ces derniers ne tarderaient pas en conséquence à se voir placés dans l'alternative, soit de rompre les négociations et de se séparer, soit d'attendre dans une complète inaction le résultat des négociations ultérieures entre leurs Gouvernements. Loin de faciliter la solution des difficultés, de telles éventualités ne contribueraient qu'à compliquer la situation.

Pour ce qui est de Pouli-Khatoum et de Pendjdé, le Cabinet Impérial se trouve dans l'impossibilité de s'associer aux appréciations contenues dans la note de M. le Comte de Granville du 23 Décembre dernier. La première de ces deux localités est séparée par une distance de 80 kilom. environ de la frontière réelle de l'Afghanistan, laquelle, suivant le témoignage du Colonel C. M. MacGregor, est formée par la chaîne des hauteurs, qui borde au nord la route conduisant de Hérat à Kehriz.* Le detachement Russe qui vient d'être installé à Pouli-Khatoum n'y a pas trouvé la moindre trace d'habitations Afghanes. Et quant à l'oasis de Pendjdé, qui, dans le courant de l'année passée, a été à deux reprises visité par des voyageurs Russes, le fait tout récent de son occupation par les Afghans ne saurait, conformément aux principes de l'Arrangement de 1872–73, constituer un titre de possession en faveur de ceux-ci.

Dans cet état de cause et dans le cas où le Gouvernement Britannique persisterait dans sa résolution de repousser notre proposition relative à l'entente préalable sur les limites de la zone de délimitation, le Cabinet Impérial serait d'avis que, pour empêcher les négociations d'aboutir à une impasse, les deux Gouvernements pourraient essayer de s'entendre sur la ligne même de démarcation à tracer entre leurs sphères d'action respectives. Suivant l'opinion d'hommes compétents Russes cette ligne pourrait être tracée de la façon suivante :—

En partant du point de la rive droite du Héri-Rud, sis à une distance de 10 verstes environ au sud de Zoulfajar la ligne se dirigerait par Kehrizi-Elias et Kehrizi-Soumé jusqu'au ruisseau de Yegri-Gueuk, suivrait la crête des hauteurs qui bordent la rive droite de ce ruisseau jusqu'aux ruines de Tchéménibid et ensuite la chaîne de collines de la rive droite du Kouschk, jusqu'à Havuzi-Khan, d'où elle irait rejoindre un point sis au nord de Méroutchak, qui resterait à l'Afghanistan. A partir de ce point la ligne de démarcation suivrait la crête des hauteurs qui bordent au nord la vallée du Kaïsor et à l'ouest celle du Sangalak, et en laissant Andkhoï à l'est, elle rejoindrait Khodja-Saleh sur l'Amou-Daria.

Conformément à ce tracé, tout le territoire compris entre la ligne de démarcation ci-dessus décrite et celle dont parle le Colonel MacGregor serait annexé à l'Afghanistan, mais à la condition que l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan s'engage à ne point faire élever dans les limites de ce territoire des fortifications qui pourraient devenir une menace pour les populations de l'autre côté de la frontière. Par contre, l'oasis de Pendjdé serait compris dans la sphère d'action de la Russie. Ainsi qu'il a été expliqué plus haut, le Cabinet Impérial croit devoir insister sur ce point, pour la raison que Pendjdé est exclusivement habité par les Turcomans-Saryks, dont les congénères établis à Yolatan et à Tcharbagh ont déjà fait leur soumission aux autorités Russes. Par le fait de l'annexion de Pendjdé à l'Afghanistan la tribu des Saryks serait partagée en deux, et ce partage, vu surtout les habitudes nomades et les instincts pillards des Turcomans, ne manquerait pas de devenir la source de complications entre la Russie et l'Afghanistan—complication qu'il est de l'intérêt commun des deux Grandes Puissances de conjurer.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Cabinet has had under consideration the note dated the 23rd December, 1884, which Earl Granville addressed to the Russian Ambassador in London on the subject of the delimitation of Afghanistan.

The Imperial Cabinet having felt compelled to propose to the Cabinet of London

* "Narrative of a Journey through the Province of Khorassan and on the North-West Frontier of Afghanistan in 1875, by Colonel C. M. MacGregor." London, 1879:—

"Tout le long de cette route la chaîne des hauteurs peu élevées qui ferme la vue dans la direction du nord, est garnie d'une ligne de tours d'observation (karauls) qui sont censées être occupées par des gardes-frontières, mais qui, comme de raison, ne le sont jamais. En cas où elles seraient occupées, ainsi que l'on en avait l'intention ces tours auraient pu constituer une défense effective. . . ."—(Vol. i, p. 241).

to come to a previous understanding with regard to a zone of operations, the British Government, as appears from the note above mentioned, is quite prepared to agree that the investigations of the Boundary Commissioners should not be carried beyond the line which, in the opinion of the Imperial Cabinet, might be adopted as the northern limit of the zone in question; but, on the other hand, they do not think it possible to arrange a previous definition of the southern limit of the said zone. The British Cabinet is also unable to admit that Pul-i-Khatum and Penjdeh are outside the frontier of Afghanistan, as is considered by the Imperial Cabinet, and it is of opinion that these questions should be settled by the Commissioners on the spot.

The above-mentioned note of Earl Granville is silent as to the reasons which prevent the British Government from accepting the proposal of the Imperial Cabinet, and it does not make the smallest allusion to the circumstances and considerations which prompted that proposal, and which were set forth in detail in the note addressed by M. de Giers to the British Ambassador on the 14th November, 1884.

In view of the urgent character of those considerations, the Imperial Cabinet cannot help once more calling the most serious attention of the British Government to their reasons for fearing that, under present circumstances, and in default of a previous understanding with regard to the extent of the zone of operations, the dispatch of the Commissioners to the spot would only result in a misunderstanding, or even in failure, the consequences of which could not fail to exercise an unfavourable influence on the further progress of the negotiations.

From the outset of these negotiations it was stipulated between the two Governments that all previous Agreements concluded on the subject of Central Asia should remain in force; the Imperial Cabinet, in its note of the 17th June, 1884, thought it right to point out to the British Ambassador that, in its view, the approaching delimitation was intended to complete that of 1872-73. The two Cabinets agreed, moreover, that the direction of the line of frontier between the Amou-Daria and the Heri-Rud should be so drawn as to avoid as far as possible all grounds of misunderstanding and complications in the future. The possessions of the Ameer Shere Ali Khan having formed the basis of the Agreement of 1872-73, that same basis should be adopted in the approaching delimitation, and the Imperial Cabinet was careful, in its note of the 30th July, 1884, to state that, in its opinion, complications could only be avoided if the boundary to be marked out were in conformity with the geographical and ethnographical conditions of the territory to be delimitated.

Starting from this point of view, the Imperial Cabinet thought it right to warn the British Ambassador that it felt compelled to demand that the whole tribe of Saryk Turkomans, of whom a portion had already made submission to the Russian authorities, should be included within the Russian sphere of action, and that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan should abandon all notion of extending his territory at the expense of districts inhabited by the Turkomans in question.

Although the British Government did not feel able to adhere to this proposal, M. de Giers nevertheless thought it right to warn Sir Edward Thornton that the Imperial Cabinet reserved to itself the right to insist on the adoption of the above scheme.

As the realization of this scheme was only possible on condition that the Oasis of Penjdeh, inhabited by the Saryks, should not be invaded by the Afghans, the Imperial Cabinet did not fail, as early as the month of June 1884, to call the attention of the British Government to the rumours attributing to the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan the intention of taking possession of this district. Subsequently, in giving its definitive consent to the dispatch of its Commissioner to the spot, it was obliged to remind the British Ambassador that the territorial encroachments of the Afghans could not fail to neutralize the effect of the conciliatory intentions of the two Powers, and to create serious obstacles to the delimitation. (Note of the 25th August, 1884.)

At the beginning of the month of September the Imperial Cabinet noticed with regret that the friendly representations which they had made to the British Government had not prevented the invasion of Penjdeh by the Afghans, and in order to prevent the delimitation from deviating from the principles laid down in 1872–73 it was compelled to propose to the British Ambassador that an understanding should be arrived at previously as to the limits of the zone which should form the object of the investigations of the respective Commissioners.

The reply of the Foreign Office was not received at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs until the 5th November; the British Government, while recognizing the advantage of defining the zone of operations, nevertheless contended that the settlement of this question should be left to the respective Commissioners; and that,

before coming to an understanding on the subject with his Russian colleague, the English Commissioner was bound to consult the Delegate of the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan.

That reply was not of a nature to satisfy the Imperial Cabinet. Not having interfered with the relations between the English Commissioner and the Afghan authorities, the Imperial Cabinet found it impossible to admit that the necessity of preliminary explanations between General Lumsden and the Delegate of the Ameer could form an obstacle to a direct understanding between the two Governments. Such an understanding might, in its opinion, meet with the less difficulty in that it would be sufficient to define the limits of the zone in general terms, and that this definition, which must clearly precede the commencement of the work of delimitation, could only be effected on the basis of information previously obtained and already to be found in existing maps.

The Imperial Cabinet, with a view to hasten the solution of this question, and convinced that the reasonableness of the above observations could not escape the British Government, thought it advisable to send Sir E. Thornton a proposal for a zone, drawn up by General Zelenoi. The Russian Commissioner, having taken Dowletabad as the starting-point of the northern limit of the zone as being situated at a great distance from the Afghan possessions, was, on the other hand, of opinion that the southern limit of the zone should follow the chain of heights which border on the north the Valley of Herat, and formed in 1875, according to the evidence of Colonel Macgregor, the real frontier of Afghanistan. As the Oasis of Penjdeh has only been quite recently occupied by the Afghans, that district was included in the zone. According to the view of the Imperial Cabinet this proposal of General Zelenoi's would not in any way prejudice the direction of the future line of boundary, the tracing of which should form the subject of a future understanding, either between the respective Commissioners or between the two Governments. This proposal was only intended to prevent eventual disputes between the Commissioners with regard to the scope to be given to the survey and sketching operations, and at the same time to furnish the Imperial Government with a guarantee that the line of the future frontier should not be affected by the territorial changes consequent upon encroachments by the Afghans, and that the Russian Commissioner should not be prevented visiting the localities a preliminary examination of which would form an essential element in the future delimitation.

Lord Granville's answer, contained in his note of the 23rd December last, is calculated to deprive us of the above-specified guarantees, and to prove that, in the present state of affairs, the meeting of the Commissioners at Sarakhs could no longer fulfil the object which the two Powers had agreed to keep in view. The Russian Commissioner could only repeat to his English colleague the proposal which has just been rejected by the British Government, and there is every reason to suppose that the circumstances which have prevented the two Governments from coming to an agreement with regard to the limits of the zone of operations would not fail to raise insurmountable obstacles to a settlement on this point between the respective Commissioners; the latter would consequently at once find themselves reduced to the alternative either of breaking off the negotiations and separating, or of awaiting in total inaction the result of further negotiations between their Governments. So far from facilitating the solution of the difficulties, such occurrences would only tend to complicate the situation.

With regard to Pul-i-Khatum and Penjdeh, the Imperial Cabinet finds it impossible to agree with the views expressed in Lord Granville's note of the 23rd December last. The former of these two places is separated by a distance of about 80 kilom. from the real frontier of Afghanistan, which, according to the evidence of Colonel C. M. Macgregor, is formed by a chain of heights bordering to the north the road leading from Herat to Kehriz.* The Russian post which has just been established at Pul-i-Khatum has not found the slightest trace of Afghan habitations there. Again, as to the Penjdeh Oasis, which has on two occasions in the course of last year been visited by Russian travellers, the quite recent event of its occupation by the Afghans would not, according to the principles of the Agreement of 1872-73, constitute a title to possession in their favour.

* "Narrative of a Journey through the Province of Khorassan and on the North-west Frontier of Afghanistan in 1875." London, 1879 :—

"All along to the north of this road, on the crest of a long, low ridge, which shuts out the view in this direction, there is a line of look-out ('karawal') towers, which are supposed to be occupied by the frontier guards, but of course never are. If they were occupied, as intended, there is no doubt they would form a very efficient defence," &c

In this state of affairs, and in the event of the British Government persisting in their determination to reject our proposal respecting a preliminary understanding with regard to the limits of the zone of operations, the Imperial Cabinet is of opinion that, in order to prevent the negotiations from coming to a dead-lock, the two Governments might endeavour to come to an understanding with regard to the actual line of demarcation to be drawn between their respective spheres of action. According to the opinion of competent Russian judges this line might be drawn in the following manner:—

Starting from a point on the right bank of the Heri-Rud, situated at a distance of about 10 versts south of Zoulfagar, the line would run by Kehrizi-Elias and Kehrizi-Soumé to the rivulet of Yegri-Gueuk, would follow the crest of the heights which fringe the right bank of this rivulet as far as the ruins of Tchemenibid, and then the chain of hills from the right bank of the Kouschk as far as Havuzi Khan, whence it would run to a point situated to the north of Meruchak, which would be left to Afghanistan. From this point the line of frontier would follow the crest of the heights which to the north border the Valley of Kaïsor, and to the west that of Sangalak, and leaving Andkhoï on the east, would run to Khoja-Saleh on the Amou-Daria.

According to this line, all the country comprised within the above-described line of demarcation, and that spoken of by Colonel Macgregor, would be annexed to Afghanistan; on the condition, however, that the Ameer Abdurrahman Khan undertakes not to erect fortifications within the limits of this territory which might become a source of menace to the inhabitants on the other side of the frontier. On the other hand, the Penjdeh Oasis would be included in the Russian sphere of action. As explained above, the Imperial Cabinet considers itself bound to insist upon this point, Penjdeh being inhabited exclusively by Saryk Turkomans, whose fellow-tribesmen at Yolatan and Tcharbagh have already made their submission to the Russian authorities. By the annexation of Penjdeh to Afghanistan the Saryk tribe would be cut in two, and this division, especially considering the nomad habits and plundering instincts of the Turkomans, could not fail to become a source of complications between Russia and Afghanistan—complications which it is the interest of both Great Powers to guard against.

No. 183.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 10, 3·25 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, January* 30, 1885.

I PROPOSE to move from this to Gulran, near to Khombau Pass, reaching there 14th February. Shall there be within three days' communication of Meshed, and ready to proceed to Sarakhs should General Zelenoi be there, or to carry out any instructions.

No. 184.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 10, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador called at this Office to-day, and stated that his Government were informed from Askabad that 150 Afghan cavalry had occupied Zoulfagar, and that an Afghan post had been established at Sari Yazi.

I informed his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government had no news of any Afghan advance to the points named, but that I would ascertain the facts from Sir Peter Lumsden.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 185.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 10, 1885, 6·20 P.M.

RUSSIAN Government are informed from Askabad that 150 Afghan cavalry have occupied Zoulfagar, and that an Afghan post has been established at Sari Yazi.

What truth is there in this report?

No. 186.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 14, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador told me to-day that he had a long discussion with Lord Kimberley on the question of the Afghan frontier, in which the Secretary of State for India had stated the views of Her Majesty's Government with an animation which showed the interest he felt on the subject.

His Excellency added that he had the advantage of advice and information from M. Lessar, who had been sent from St. Petersburgh to assist him. He had found M. Lessar very moderate in his views, and had been assured by him that the line of boundary now proposed by the Russian Government would give to Afghanistan all the strategical points required for the best defensive frontier, and that it had, in fact, been purposely so drawn on economical grounds.

I observed that it was not merely necessary to consider whether the frontier was a good one, or even the best in a military and technical point of view; the Ameer would naturally expect, and we were bound to see, that he should be confirmed in the possession of the territory which really belonged to him.

M. de Staal admitted the justice of this argument, but said that the Ameer was laying claim to territories which might have belonged to Afghanistan 200 years ago, but over which her Rulers had exercised no valid jurisdiction certainly since the beginning of the present century.

His Excellency asked whether I had noticed the statements which had appeared in the newspapers as to preparations for a Russian advance upon Herat. He said that he was disposed to attribute them to speculations on the Stock Exchange at Vienna. He added that there was no foundation for them; that it would be contrary to all good faith that such a measure should be taken while the Russian Government were in friendly negotiation with that of Her Majesty for the settlement of the frontier, and that it would, moreover, be most impolitic to resort to a course which would rouse the hostility of the whole of Afghanistan.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 187.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 15, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, February* 15, 1885.

YOUR Lordship's telegram of 10th instant.

Mr. Finn reports from Turbet-i-Sheikh Jam on the 12th instant as follows:—

"Russian officer and Téké horses said to have occupied Zulfekar Pass. Governor of Kusan is proceeding thither with force to see if true; if so, to expel them."

No. 188.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 17, 1885, 7·15 P.M.

HER Majesty's Government are in communication with Sir P. Lumsden as to a line for counter-proposal to Russian Government.

No. 189.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 18, 2·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, February* 9, 1885.

A BODY of Russian cavalry, 100 strong, threatened to attack an Afghan outpost. They then pushed passed it and occupied Aimak Jarra, 3 miles south of Sari Yazi. Colonel Alikhanoff admitted this spot to be the northern limit of the Murghab lands. Ameer's representative proposed to drive Russians back by force, but asked for immediate advice. I replied that Afghan outpost should be withdrawn south of Aimak Jarra, that Russian officer be informed that any attempt to patrol further in direction of Ak Tepe will be resisted by force, and that Her Majesty's Government and His Highness the Ameer will be at once informed of the movement.

No. 190.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 19, 1885.

AS your Excellency will have learnt from my despatch of the 17th instant, the Russian Ambassador called at this Office on the 10th instant and informed me that the Russian Government had received reports from Askabad to the effect that Afghan posts had been established at Zulficar and Sari Yazi, and M. de Staal stated that such an advance would be in flagrant contradiction with the bases of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1872-73.

I telegraphed to the British Commissioner to ask if there was any truth in this report. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to enable Her Majesty's Government to receive a reply to that communication, but on the other hand, Sir Peter Lumsden reports in a telegram dated the 9th instant, from Bala Murghab, that 100 Russian cavalry threatening to attack have pushed by Afghan outpost and occupied Aimak Jarra, 3 miles south of Sari Yazi. News has also been received from the British Agent at Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam, dated the 12th February, that a Russian officer, accompanied by Téké horsemen, was reported to have occupied Zulficar Pass, and that the Afghan Governor of Kusan was proceeding with a force to ascertain if the report was true, and if so, to expel them.

On the 20th November last I instructed your Excellency to represent to the Russian Government the embarrassment likely to arise from the presence of Russian troops at Pul-i-Khatun, and to press strongly for their withdrawal to Sarakhs, in which case steps would be taken to obtain the retirement to Panjdeh of the Afghan detachment said to have advanced to Sari Yazi. I added that unless the Russian frontier authorities abstained from forward movements pending the commencement of the work of the Commission, it would be difficult to restrain the Ameer and his officials from taking such steps as would appear to them necessary in order to safeguard Afghan rights.

I have to request your Excellency to remind the Russian Government of this communication, and to point out that in spite of this remonstrance the Russian troops not only continue to hold Pul-i-Khatun, but have now advanced to Sari Yazi, and that unless these proceedings are immediately arrested collisions will ensue which may lead to the most serious consequences.

Her Majesty's Government could not advise the Afghans to withdraw from territory which they claim as their own, but if the Russian Government will give orders to their military Commanders, pending the decision of the Joint Commission, to withdraw from Sari Yazi, and to make no further movement in advance, Her Majesty's Government will call upon the authorities of the Ameer not to allow any advance of Afghan troops beyond the points actually in their occupation.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 191.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 20, 1885, 2·10 P.M.

ACTION reported in your telegram of 9th February approved.

I have sent following instructions to Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh:—

[See No. 190.]

No. 192.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 23.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 19, 1884.

DURING my visit yesterday afternoon to M. de Giers at his office, I took an opportunity of alluding to the report which had reached me, that 150 Russian soldiers had advanced as far south as the Zulfagar Pass on the Heri-Rud. His Excellency replied that it was actually the case; General Komaroff, he said, had received information that Afghan troops were advancing in that direction, as well as on the Murghab, on the road to Yulutan; he had therefore thought it his duty to detach a small force in each direction, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the report was well founded. It had been found to be true in both cases that Afghan troops, though in small numbers, hardly more than patrols, had advanced towards Yulutan, even beyond Sari Yazi. The other party of Russians had proceeded as far as the Zulfagar Pass, where they had actually come within sight of an Afghan force, who were encamped at a distance of not more than 600 yards from them.

On my pointing out to his Excellency how great the risk of a conflict would be if the two parties remained so near to each other, and to what disastrous consequences such a conflict might lead, he said that, though instructions had been given that the Russian soldiers should remain where they were, the most stringent orders had been issued that all possible means should be taken to avoid a conflict, and he hoped that nothing of the sort would take place, unless the Afghans should provoke it, by an attack upon the Russian party.

To my question, whether, if the Afghans retreated, the Russians would also withdraw, I could obtain no answer.

M. de Giers, however, assured me that no Russian troops would be allowed to pass beyond the line which the Russian Ambassador in London had been instructed to propose to your Lordship as the north-west frontier in Afghanistan. I am not yet acquainted with the nature of this proposal, for M. de Giers tells me that he has not yet received a copy of the note addressed to your Lordship by M. de Staal on this subject, and does not know whether it was an exact copy of the instructions furnished to him or a note founded upon those instructions.

His Excellency expressed his earnest hope, which I believe to be sincere as far as he is concerned, that an agreement would be arrived at between the two Governments; but he said, in very plain terms, that if this should unfortunately not be the case, the Russian Government would persist in keeping possession of all the territory in that region which their troops now held. His Excellency added that as much treasure and many lives had been sacrificed in establishing order in the Trans-Caspian territory, His Imperial Majesty resolved that the population should not be exposed to renewed brigandage and predatory incursions by portions of the Turkoman tribes being cut off and included in Afghan territory whilst the remainder were engaged in peaceable pursuits under Russian Administration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 193.

Earl Granville to Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 23, 1885.

I HAVE been in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India on the subject of your despatch of the 18th December relative to matters connected

with the Afghan frontier, and forwarding copies of communications between Colonel Alikhanoff and General Ghaus-ud-din, commanding at Penjdeh.

I have to inform you that the advice given by you to the Afghan authorities, as recorded in that despatch, is approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 194.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received February 24.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, February* 12, 1885.

ON perusal of your Lordship's despatch to Sir E. Thornton of 10th November,* and in view of threatening attitude of Russians on the Murghab, as reported in my telegram of 9th, I have deferred my departure to Gulran viâ Penjdeh, and I shall wait till supplies can be removed to upper route by Marachuk and Chemeni Beed; other routes not practicable owing to dearth of supplies. I have written to officer commanding at Merv, pointing out necessity of both sides avoiding friction, and have proposed that, as I have urged Afghans to limit their patrolling to Orush Dushan, he should limit Russian patrolling to Sari Yazi. Reports as to outposts incident conflicting; Russians, however, retired, but may be induced by fact of passive action of Afghans to return and push further. It is reported that 1,000 Khivan cavalry have arrived at Merv.

No. 195.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received February 24, 1·20 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Bala Murghab, February* 12, 1885.

I HEAR from Governor of Herat that a Russian outpost of forty-five men from Pul-i-Khatun have advanced, and are now facing the Afghan outpost in Zulfekar Pass. They refused to retire unless forced. I have informed Governor that, although Ameer claims country in question, Russia regards it as a portion of territory into ownership of which the Commission is to inquire. I have urged great caution, and have advised that Afghans should make no unnecessary military demonstration. I have suggested that letter be sent to officer commanding at Sarakhs inquiring meaning of this advance, and asking, if it is meant to be preparation for war with Afghanistan, that a limit should be fixed to patrolling. Matters have come to a crisis by the simultaneous movements of Russia on Sunday last on the Murghab and the Heri-Rud. No southern limit to zone having been fixed, Russians may consider themselves at liberty to advance to limit indicated by them and remain there. I cannot advise Afghans to allow post after post to be forced, and trust Her Majesty's Government will lose no time in sending me instructions.

No. 196.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, February 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 24, 1885.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 19th instant, I have the honour to state that I have just received a Memorandum from M. de Giers, in which I am informed that the Russian Government cannot accede to the request that the advanced Russian posts at Sari-Yazi and Zulfakar Pass should be withdrawn; but assurances are at the same time given that orders have been issued to the commanders of these posts carefully to avoid conflicts with the Afghans, and that such complications need only be feared in the event of the Afghans attacking the Russian posts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

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* No. 124.

No. 197.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 25.)

My Lord, *Tehran, January 28, 1885.*

I HAVE this day received a report that the Russians have for the last two months been engaged in cutting a water-channel from above the Merv dam in the direction of the Tejjen.

If the information is correct, the object which the Russians have in view is doubtless to provide a supply of water along the line of march from the Atek territory to Merv, and thereby facilitate the passage of caravans and troops across the desert tract which intervenes between the Tejjen and the Moorgabi Rivers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 198.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received February 25.)

(Extract.) *Bala Murghab, January 9, 1885*

I SUBMIT, for your Lordship's information, a sketch map showing the routes followed by different branches of the Mission north of Herat, and the corrected position of some of the principal places.

Winter has set in with great severity, the thermometer now standing at night about zero, whilst the country generally is covered with snow.

Inclosure in No. 198.

*Sketch Map showing the Routes followed by different Branches of the British Mission north of Herat, and the corrected Position of some of the principal Places.**

No. 199.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.†

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 25, 1885.*

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh, forwarding a Memorandum which his Excellency has received from the Russian Government declining to withdraw from their advanced posts at Sari-Yazi and Zulfikar Pass, but giving assurances that the Russian officers have been instructed carefully to avoid conflicts with the Afghans.‡ The Memorandum further states that complications are only to be feared in the event of the Afghans attacking the Russian posts.

You should strongly urge the Afghan authorities not to advance.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 200.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received February 28, 9·35 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Marachek, February 17, 1885.*

TWO THOUSAND cavalry are said to be moving on Merv from Charjui.

Colonel Ridgeway remains at Penjdeh for the present. He reports that Russian outpost on the Murghab has been reinforced, and that Colonel Alikhanoff was expected to arrive at front the day before yesterday.

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* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 1.

† Substance telegraphed.

‡ See No. 205.

No. 201.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 28, 8 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *February* 19, 1885.

CAMP will move towards Gulran to-morrow.

Colonel Alikhanoff has replied that while having very friendly feelings towards English and Afghans, he has instructions from the Emperor to make Afghan outposts retire at once to Ak Tépé. In reply I have written to him expressing surprise at tone of his letter, and stating that after conversation with Ameer's Representative I find I have exhausted all means of restraining Afghans from adopting measures they deem necessary for defence of Afghan rights; told him that Afghan outposts will be withdrawn to Orush Doshan, warning him that it is impossible to induce Afghans to make further concessions, and that any advance further must entail conflict. I alluded to friendly negotiations going on between Russian Government and your Lordship, saying, in these circumstances, it was incredible that the Emperor should have instructed him to make war on Afghanistan. Finally, that I had reported by telegraph grave crisis his aggressive action had brought about, trusting that he would hesitate before entering upon a course which, besides embroiling Russia in a conflict with Afghanistan, might cause a rupture between England and Russia.

Your Lordship will, I feel sure, see the necessity of sending me early instructions as to course Her Majesty's Government wish me to take under present circumstances.

Colonel Ridgeway remains at Penjdeh to use every effort till the last moment to prevent hostilities if possible. Fifty lancers are halting here to cover his retreat in case Russians should advance and a serious engagement take place between them and the Afghans.

No. 202.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 28, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *One march from Gulran, February* 22, 1885.

I HAVE received following report from Colonel Ridgeway, dated Penjdeh, 20th instant: "Russian squadrons advanced from Orush Toshan to-day, and forced Afghan piquet, which retired. General Ghausudin dispatched horsemen to warn them if they advanced further they would be attacked. In the negotiations which ensued, Russians stated that their orders were to go as far as Pul-i-Khisti, but they would be contented if an officer and four men were allowed to see it. This was permitted, and then they withdrew for the night.

"On the same day Colonel Alikhanoff sent me the following reply:—

"'Whether you approve of it or not, my orders are that Russian troops should occupy country as far as Pul-i-Khisti; once established there they should neither go on nor fight; I must carry out my orders.'"

Afghans are in Ak Tapa. Colonel Ridgeway doing his utmost to keep frontier quiet. Attitude of Sariks is doubtful. Position is very strained, and demands immediate orders.

No. 203.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 28, 11·15 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Near Gulran, February* 22, 1885.

RUSSIAN troops to-day occupied Zulfekar Pass, Ak Robat, Pul-i-Khisti.

No. 204.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received February* 28, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, February* 23, 1885.

I REACHED this place to-day. A Russian post has come forward to Ak Robat. Ridgeway reports from Penjdeh on 21st the situation more satisfactory. Colonel Alikhanoff had located a post of Yulatan Sariks and again withdrawn.

No. 205.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February 25, 1885.*

IN consequence of the receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 14 of the 19th instant, I called upon M. de Giers on the 20th instant, informed his Excellency of the contents of that telegram, and thought it expedient to leave with him a paraphrase of it in the words of which I have the honour to inclose a copy.

On reading this document he was evidently struck by the statement that the Governor of Kusan was going with a force to ascertain whether it was true that a party of Russian soldiers were posted at Zulfikar Pass, and if so to cause them to withdraw. I took the opportunity to impress upon his Excellency the very great danger that such advances would provoke a conflict which might lead to the most disastrous consequences. He insisted, however, that they were due entirely to the action of the Afghans, who not only had advanced forces into territory which, he asserted, did not belong to the Ameer, but, as it would appear, had paid no attention to the representations which it must be supposed had been made to his Highness by Sir Peter Lumsden as to the necessity of withdrawing the advanced post from Sari-Yazi, and of subsequently making no further advances.

I pointed out to his Excellency that the first movement had been made by the Russians in occupying Old Sarakhs and then Pul-i-Khatum, and that it could hardly be expected that, when the Imperial Government had refused to give orders for the withdrawal even from the latter place of the Russian outpost the Afghans would retire from Sari-Yazi.

But as these recriminations seemed to be to little purpose, I confined myself to endeavouring to persuade his Excellency of the expediency of withdrawing the advanced Russian posts both from Sari-Yazi and Zulfikar Pass, on the ground of the great danger of a conflict arising between parties of Russians and Afghans, who were actually looking at each other. His Excellency promised that he would at once take the orders of his Imperial Majesty upon the subject. He did not deny the danger, but said that the most stringent orders had been issued to the Russian officers to avoid a conflict by every possible means, and that he felt convinced that none would take place unless the Afghans should actually attack the Russians, and should oblige them to defend themselves. He further assured me that on no account would a Russian force advance beyond the line which M. de Staal had been instructed to propose to your Lordship, and with the details of which I was not then acquainted.

Yesterday afternoon I received from M. de Giers the Memorandum of which a copy is inclosed, and the salient points of which I telegraphed to your Lordship last evening. Besides these it contains little more than the pretensions which have been so often put forward by the Russian Government since the occupation of Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 205.

Paraphrase of Telegram No. 14, of February 19.—(Communicated to M. de Giers, February 20, 1885.

BARON DE STAAL stated to Earl Granville on the 10th instant that the Russian Government were informed from Askhabad that Afghan troops had taken up positions at Sari-Yazi and the Zulfikar Pass.

This would constitute, his Excellency declared, a complete violation of the arrangements arrived at in 1872 and 1873. No reply has as yet been received to his Lordship's telegram to Sir P. Lumsden inquiring as to the truth of this report. On the other hand, however, Sir P. Lumsden reported on the 9th instant from Bala Murghab, that a body of Russian cavalry, numbering 100 men, had forced their way past the Afghan outposts and established themselves at Aimak Jarra, 3 miles to the south of Sari-Yazi.

The British Agent at Turbet-i-Sheikh Jam further reported, on the 12th instant, that the Zulfikar Pass was said to have been occupied by a Russian officer and body of Téké horse, and that the Governor of Kusan was going with an escort to ascertain whether the report was true, and if so, to cause them to withdraw.

Lord Granville has therefore instructed Her Majesty's Ambassador to again draw the

attention of the Russian Government to the communication made to M. de Giers on the 21st November last, and to point out to his Excellency that the Russian forces not only continue to hold Pul-i-Khatum in spite of the remonstrances made by Her Majesty's Government, but have also advanced to Sari-Yazi, and that these proceedings will, unless immediately arrested, result in collisions which may have most serious consequences.

Although Her Majesty's Government could not recommend the withdrawal of the Afghan troops from the territory which they claim as their own, yet should instructions to withdraw from Sari-Yazi, and to make no further movement in advance pending the decision of the Joint Commission, be transmitted to the Russian military Commanders, Her Majesty's Government will call upon the Afghan authorities to prevent their forces from occupying any points beyond the territory now actually held by them.

Inclosure 2 in No. 205.

Memorandum received from M. de Giers.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères a pris connaissance de la communication que M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique a cru devoir lui remettre à la date du 8 (20) courant, et qui a pour objet l'occupation du défilé de Zoul-fagar par la milice Turcomane, ainsi que l'apparition d'un détachement de cavalerie Russe à Aïmak-Djar.

Ces procédés pouvant, conformément à l'opinion du Gouvernement Britannique, donner lieu à des conflits et amener les plus graves complications, M. l'Ambassadeur a été chargé d'insister auprès du Cabinet Impérial pour que le détachement de cavalerie ci-dessus mentionné reçoive l'ordre de se retirer au delà de Sary-yaz et pour qu'il soit défendu aux troupes Russes d'avancer jusqu'à ce que la Commission Mixte n'ait pris une décision quelconque. De son côté le Gouvernement Britannique serait prêt à employer ses efforts pour empêcher les troupes Afghanes d'avancer au delà des points occupés aujourd'hui par elles.

Le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères a d'autant plus lieu d'être surpris de l'insistance déployée par M. l'Ambassadeur dans sa communication que toutes les représentations qui ont été adressées à son Excellence par le Cabinet Impérial dans le but de prévenir des empiètements de la part des autorités Afghanes sont restées complètement infructueuses.

C'est à la date du 9 Juin dernier que le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères s'était fait un devoir de signaler à l'attention de M. l'Ambassadeur les bruits qui prêtaient aux autorités Afghanes l'intention de s'emparer de Pendjdé. L'occupation de cette localité par les Afghans n'ayant pu être empêchée, le Cabinet Impérial s'était flatté de l'espoir que les effets de cet envahissement auraient pu être neutralisés, si les deux Cabinets parvenaient à s'entendre sur les limites d'une zone de délimitation, laquelle comprendrait entre autres le territoire de Pendjdé. L'accueil qui a été fait à Londres à cette proposition conciliante n'a pas répondu à nos attentes, et en présence de ce fait, ainsi que des armaments poursuivis par les autorités Afghanes, le Cabinet Impérial s'est vu placé dans la nécessité d'aviser aux moyens de sauvegarder ses droits. L'envoi d'un détachement Russe à Pouli Khatum n'a été qu'une conséquence directe et inévitable de cet état de choses; mais elle ne devait point préjuger les décisions de la Commission de Délimitation dans le cas où les deux Gouvernements parviendraient à tomber d'accord sur les moyens propres à écarter les obstacles qui s'étaient opposés à la réunion des Commissaires respectifs.

La proposition relative à la zone de délimitation ayant été déclinée par M. le Comte de Granville dans sa note du 11 (23) Décembre, 1884, l'Ambassadeur de l'Empereur fut invité à faire une nouvelle démarche conciliante auprès de son Excellence et à lui proposer une entente sur une ligne de démarcation définitive. A peine M. de Staal s'était-il acquitté de cet ordre que le Cabinet Impérial recevait d'Askabad la nouvelle que les troupes Afghanes s'étaient avancées, d'un côté, jusqu'à Zoul-fagar et, de l'autre, jusqu'à Sary-yaz. C'est pour empêcher des envahissements ultérieurs propres à porter une atteinte irréparable aux intérêts de la Russie se rattachant à la délimitation que le Commandant des troupes de la province Transcaspienne fut invité à faire avancer les avant-postes Russes.

M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique voudra bien relever de ce qui précède que les derniers mouvements militaires dans la province Transcaspienne n'ont été motivés que par la nécessité qui incombe à la Russie de sauvegarder contre des empiètements des Afghans les droits qu'elle a acquis au prix de lourds sacrifices, et qu'en présence des

intentions hostiles dont semblent animées les autorités Afghanes le Cabinet Impérial se trouve dans une complète impossibilité d'obtempérer à la demande formulée dans la communication ci-dessus mentionnée de son Excellence.

Le Cabinet Impérial se fait d'ailleurs un devoir d'assurer M. le Ambassadeur que, dans le but de prévenir des complications, les Commandants des postes Russes ont reçu l'ordre d'éviter soigneusement des conflits avec les troupes Afghanes et que des complications ne seraient en conséquence à craindre que dans le cas où les troupes Afghanes se porteraient à des actes d'hostilité à l'égard des postes Russes.

St. Pétersbourg, le 12 *Février*, 1885.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Foreign Office has taken note of the communication which Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador made to him on the 8th (20th) instant on the subject of the occupation of the Pass of Zoul-fagar by the Turkoman militia and the appearance of a detachment of Russian cavalry at Aimak-Djar.

As these proceedings may, in the opinion of the British Government, cause collisions and entail the gravest complications, the Ambassador has been instructed to urge on the Imperial Cabinet that orders should be given to the above-mentioned detachment of cavalry to retire beyond Sary-yag, and that the Russian troops should be forbidden to advance until the Mixed Commission had arrived at some decision. For their part the British Government would be ready to endeavour to prevent the Afghan troops from advancing beyond the points at this moment occupied by them.

The Imperial Foreign Office has all the more reason to be surprised at the persistence displayed by the Ambassador in his communication, that all the representations which have been presented to his Excellency by the Imperial Cabinet with the object of preventing the encroachments of the Afghan authorities have proved quite fruitless.

On the 9th June last the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs considered it their duty to direct the Ambassador's attention to the rumours which imputed to the Afghan authorities the intention to occupy Penjdeh. The occupation of this place by the Afghans not having been prevented, the Imperial Cabinet flattered themselves with the hope that the effects of this invasion might be neutralized if the two Cabinets succeeded in coming to an understanding as to the limits of a zone of delimitation which should include with other districts that of Penjdeh. The reception which this conciliatory proposition met with in London did not answer to our expectations, and in view of this fact, as well as of the military measures taken by the Afghan authorities, the Imperial Cabinet found themselves under the necessity of taking measures to protect their rights. The dispatch of a detachment of troops to Pouli Khatun was only a direct and inevitable consequence of this state of things, but could in no wise prejudice the decisions of the Boundary Commission in the event of the two Governments succeeding in coming to an agreement about the measures likely to overcome the obstacles which have stood in the way of the meeting of the respective Commissioners.

The proposal relative to the zone of operations having been declined by Earl Granville in his note of the 11th (23rd) December, 1884, the Imperial Ambassador was instructed to make a further conciliatory overture to his Excellency, and to propose to him an understanding about a definite boundary line. Scarcely had M. de Staal carried out this order than the Imperial Cabinet received from Askabad the news that the Afghan troops had advanced on the one side as far as Zoul-fagar, and on the other as far as Sary-yaz. In order to prevent further invasions which might injure irreparably Russian interests in connection with the frontier, the Commandant of the troops in the Trans-Caspian Province was instructed to advance the Russian outposts.

Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador will gather from what has been stated above that the latest military movements in the Trans-Caspian Province have only been caused by the necessity incumbent on Russia of protesting against Afghan encroachments on the rights which she has acquired at the price of heavy sacrifices, and that in view of the hostile intentions with which the Afghan authorities seem to be animated, the Imperial Cabinet is entirely unable to submit to the demand put forward in his Excellency's communication above mentioned.

The Imperial Cabinet moreover assure the Ambassador that, with the object of preventing complications, the Commandants of Russian posts have received orders to

avoid carefully conflicts with the Afghan troops, and that complications are therefore only to be feared in case the Afghan troops were to attack the Russian posts.

St. Petersburgh, February 12, 1885.

No. 206.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, February* 26, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation into French of an article in the "Moscow Gazette," which appeared in this morning's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," relating to the Afghan boundary. It is a history in moderate language of the facts concerning this question entirely from the Russian point of view, and appears to be officially inspired.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 206.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of February 14 (26), 1885.

LA "Gazette de Moscow" publie l'article que voici :—

"Les journaux Anglais manifestent hautement leur indignation de ce que le Général Zélénoï, nommé Commissaire de la Russie pour la délimitation de l'Afghanistan, ait tardé à se rendre au bourg Persan de Sarakhs, où il devait se rencontrer déjà au mois d'Octobre avec le Général Lumsden, Commissaire désigné par l'Angleterre. Ce fait est considéré par les feuilles en question comme une atteinte porté à la dignité de la Grande-Bretagne et comme la preuve évidente de l'attention secrète, qu'aurait la Russie, de décliner la délimitation, pour pouvoir continuer sans obstacles sa marche en avant dans la direction de l'Afghanistan et de l'Inde.

"Il n'y a que quelques journaux dont l'opinion diffère à cet égard et encore sont-ce seulement ceux qui se trouvent sous l'influence des cercles militaires et politiques de l'Inde. A leur avis, dont la sincérité est sujette à caution, l'absence du Commissaire Russe serait très favorable au Général Lumsden, qui est en mesure de profiter de cette circonstance pour circuler librement le long des frontières de l'Afghanistan, étudier les lieux et prendre des mesures pour la consolidation du prestige de l'Angleterre. Le même point de vue est exposé dans les dépêches et les correspondances provenant du camp du Commissaire Britannique: elles font constamment mention de démonstrations sympathiques et de réceptions amicales, dont les Anglais sont l'objet de la part des populations locales: Turcomans-Saryks, Djemchidis, &c.

"S'il y a différence d'opinions dans la presse Anglaise au sujet du retard de l'arrivée du Commissaire Russe, elle n'a qu'une voix par contre pour manifester son indignation par rapport à la récente occupation par un détachement de troupes Russes d'un point situé sur la rive droite du Heriroud près de Poulikhatoun se trouvant à 60 verstes au sud de notre nouvel établissement—le Vieux-Sarakhs. Les Anglais croient que cette occupation porte atteinte à l'intégrité du territoire Afghan, dont la frontière sur le Heriroud aboutirait à leur avis au Vieux-Sarakhs lui-même et atteindrait sur le Mourgab presque jusqu'à Iol-Otan.

"Malgré le soin avec lequel on cache au public le véritable état des négociations entre la Russie et l'Angleterre, les renseignements qui ont déjà pénétré dans la presse suffisent pour que l'on puisse se rendre compte des causes réelles des difficultés qui se sont produites et apprécier à leur juste valeur les accusations dirigées par les Anglais contre la Russie. Pour jeter plus de lumière sur les faits, il y a lieu de faire un léger retour sur le passé, en se reportant à l'entente survenue entre les deux Puissances en 1873 au sujet des affaires de l'Asie Centrale.

"Cette entente, dont le plan a été exposé dans une dépêche de Lord Granville publiée à cette époque et adressée le 17 Octobre, 1872, à Lord Loftus, avait pour but de tracer avec le plus d'exactitude possible une ligne de démarcation entre les sphères d'action de chacune des deux Puissances, afin de prévenir tout sujet de malentendus entre elles, et les deux Cabinets avaient consenti à reconnaître comme telle la frontière nord-ouest des possessions effectives de l'Émir Schir-Ali-Khan, qui régnait alors sur

l'Afghanistan. A cette époque, nous n'occupions sur la côte orientale de la mer Caspienne que Krasnovodsk et il ne pouvait pas être question d'une marche à travers les steppes Turcomanes. Il ne pouvait donc se produire de prétextes de malentendus entre la Russie et l'Angleterre qu'en cas de collision entre le Boukhara et l'Afghanistan, dont le premier était soumis à notre influence exclusive et le second à celle de l'Angleterre. La direction de la ligne de démarcation ou plutôt la frontière septentrionale de l'Afghanistan avait donc été tracée conformément à ce qui précède. On avait adoptée pour point de départ de cette frontière le Lac de Sary-Koul dans la partie orientale du Pamir et elle continuait jusqu'au poste Afghan de Khodja-Salekh, qu'il avait été décidé de reconnaître comme le point extrême du territoire Afghan sur la rive gauche de l'Amou-Daria.

"Pour ce qui est des territoires Afghans à l'ouest de Khodja-Salekh, la dépêche susmentionnée de Lord Granville se bornait à dire que l'autorité de l'Émir Shir-Ali-Khan s'étendait sur les arrondissements: 'd'Aktcha, de Séripoul, de Maïmeneh, de Shibberjan, et d'Andkoï—dont le dernier serait la frontière extrême des possessions Afghanes au nord-ouest—le désert qui se trouve au delà appartenant aux tribus indépendantes de Turcomans.'

"Depuis l'annexion à la Russie de l'oasis de Merv et du Iol-Otan et depuis l'occupation du Vieux-Sarakhs, sur la rive droite du Heriroud, on a reconnu la nécessité de définir d'une manière exacte la frontière septentrionale de l'Afghanistan depuis Khodja-Salekh jusqu'au Heriroud. La définition de cette partie de la frontière ne pouvait se faire que sur la base de cette même entente Russo-Anglaise de 1873, qui, malgré l'insuffisance de ses indications, nous accordait le droit incontestable d'exiger que la frontière fût tracée le long des limites septentrionales des contrées soumises, de fait, à l'autorité de l'Émir Shir-Ali-Khan et que les peuplades Turcomanes qui jouissaient de leur indépendance en 1873—mais dont une partie s'est déjà soumise à l'autorité de la Russie l'année dernière—fussent écartées des limites de l'Afghanistan et incorporées dans la sphère de notre influence.

"Ce dernier principe était d'autant plus important que—dans le cas où il aurait été reconnu—la direction de la frontière Russo-Afghane aurait été entièrement conforme aux conditions ethnographiques locales, et que l'on aurait pu éviter le partage entre la Russie et l'Afghanistan de peuplades appartenant à la même race—partage qui, en vue des habitudes nomades de ces peuplades et de leur tendance à l'insubordination—n'aurait pas manqué de devenir la source de constantes réclamations et de complications entre les deux voisins.

"Le tracé de la ligne-frontière de Khodja-Salekh jusqu'au cours de la Rivière Mourgab me semblait devoir présenter aucune difficulté particulière, vu que sur toute cette étendue les possessions de l'Afghanistan sont entourées de steppes arides qui forment une frontière naturelle, mais la contrée située entre le Mourgab et le Heriroud se trouve dans de tout autres conditions. Ces deux rivières, à leur sortie de l'Afghanistan, se dirigent au nord; elles deviennent les artères vitales de la steppe Turcomane, et offrent sur tout leur cours des conditions propices à l'établissement de colonies Turcomanes.

"La rive droite du Heriroud, qui sert de frontière entre la province Persane de Khorassan et la steppe Turcomane, était déserte jusque dans ces derniers temps par suite de la haine irréconciliable qui existe entre les races de l'Iran et celles de Touran, et ce n'est qu'après l'occupation du Vieux-Sarakhs par nos troupes que quelques établissements y ont été fondés sous notre protection par les Turcomans-Salors, la plus faible de toutes les tribus Turcomanes, et par conséquent, la plus portée au labeur pacifique et à l'agriculture. Pour ce qui est de la Vallée du Mourgab, toute sa population au sud de Merv se compose exclusivement de Turcomans Saryks, connus par leurs instincts de brigandage. Ayant été expulsés de l'oasis de Merv avant 1860 par les Tékés, les Saryks commencèrent à leur tour à évincer les Salors, qui vivaient sur la rive du Mourgab, et s'emparèrent enfin de tout le cours de cette rivière; les points extrêmes de leurs établissements étaient: au nord Iol-Otan, au sud l'oasis de Penjdé ou Pendé, qui touche à l'Afghanistan. Le manque de pâturage au Penjdé, ainsi que les hostilités qui ne discontinuaient pas entre les Tékés de Merv et les Saryks, obligeaient souvent les derniers à traverser la frontière de l'Afghanistan pour y faire paître leurs troupeaux, en conséquence de quoi les autorités Afghanes leur faisaient payer un tribut. Voilà quelles étaient les relations mutuelles entre les Afghans et les Turcomans du Penjdé; pour tout le reste ceux-ci jouissaient de l'indépendance la plus complète, dont la preuve se trouve entre autres dans les incursions auxquelles se livraient les Saryks sur les territoires de leurs voisins, et dans celles qu'ils avaient à subir eux-mêmes. La plus remarquable de ces incursions est celle que firent en 1877

les Persans de Tourbeti-Sheikhi-Djam, qui pénétrèrent dans le Penjdé, et y enlevèrent aux Saryks près de 100,000 moutons. Cette incursion servit de représailles à une longue série de brigandages effectués par les Saryks dans la province Persane du Khorassan, et qui ont eu pour résultat la ruine complète de l'arrondissement du Djam, si florissant autrefois.

"Depuis l'occupation par les troupes Russes de Merv et ensuite de Iol-Otan, dont la population forme, comme il a déjà été dit, une partie de la tribu des Saryks—les Saryks du Penjdé furent forcés à la tranquillité et les autorités Afghanes voulurent profiter de ce résultat, obtenu par la Russie, pour étendre leur propre influence sur les populations Turcomanes de leur voisinage. En 1881 déjà, aussitôt après la conquête de l'Akhal-Téké, on vit apparaître au Penjdé des individus mystérieux et, entre autres, un Indien du nom de Sia-Pousch (la Robe Noire) qui s'efforçait d'amener les Turcomans à s'unir aux Afghans contre les Russes, et qui se livrait à des intrigues à Merv même, où, avec le concours de Kadjar Khan, un des Chefs de cette contrée, il cherchait à organiser la résistance contre le détachement Russe envoyé pour procéder à l'occupation de l'oasis de Merv et finissait par tomber entre nos mains. Malgré toutes ces menées les habitants du Pendjé ne consentirent pas à se soumettre à l'Afghanistan, et, suivant l'exemple de leurs frères de Iol-Otan, s'adressèrent aux autorités Russes de Merv pour les prier de les admettre sous la protection de la Russie. Le voyageur Lessar, ingénieur Russe, avait été chargé au mois de Mars de l'année dernière d'explorer la région au sud de Merv, et il a pu visiter sans obstacle les principaux aouls du Penjdé, où il n'a rencontré aucun Afghan. Au mois de Juin, un autre voyageur Russe, le Dr. Regel, s'est rendu aussi au Penjdé, et a voulu même pénétrer plus loin, mais il en a été empêché par ordre du Commandant de la garnison Afghane à Bala-Mourgab.

"Telle était la situation des choses sur le cours supérieur du Mourgab à l'époque où les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais s'entendirent pour envoyer des Commissaires chargés du tracé de la frontière sur place. Cette situation nous donnait parfaitement le droit de conclure que dans le cas où l'on se conformerait à l'entente de 1873, qui était obligatoire pour les deux parties, c'est-à-dire que si l'on traçait la frontière de l'Afghanistan conformément à l'étendue des possessions réelles de l'Émir Shir Ali Khan, l'oasis de Penjdé devrait revenir à la Russie, sous la puissance de laquelle se trouverait réunie alors toute la tribu des Turcomans Saryks, et dans ce cas le point extrême de l'Afghanistan sur le cours supérieur du Mourgab devrait être le petit fortin Afghan de Bala-Mourgab, ou peut-être même Meroutchag, situé au nord-ouest de Bala-Mourgab. Cette délimitation aurait été parfaitement conforme aux conditions ethnographiques, et aurait servi par conséquent de gage solide, en écartant la possibilité de tout motif de malentendu entre nous et les Afghans, et par conséquent entre nous et les Anglais.

"Pour la définition de la frontière de l'Afghanistan à proximité du Heriroud, on possédait aussi quelques indications qui devaient avoir d'autant plus de poids aux yeux des Anglais que nous les devons à un des meilleurs officiers de l'armée des Indes—le Colonel (aujourd'hui Général) MacGregor, qui a entrepris en 1875, deux ans après la conclusion de l'entente Russo-Anglaise de 1873, un voyage de Hérat à Mesched. Voici les paroles de MacGregor à ce sujet:—'Sur toute la longueur de la route (de Hérat à Kohsan) et sur la crête d'une longue chaîne de hauteurs que ferme la vue dans la direction du nord se trouve établie une ligne de postes qui devaient être occupés par des gardes-frontière, mais qui sont déserts, comme de raison. Si les postes en question avaient été occupés, comme on se le proposait, il est hors de doute qu'ils auraient pu servir de défense très effective, parce que la plus petite bande de pillards Turcomans n'aurait pas pu passer entre ces postes en plein jour, et même si elle avait réussi à traverser cette ligne pendant la nuit, on aurait pu s'en convaincre dans la matinée suivante, se rendre compte du chiffre approximatif de la bande et sonner l'alarme.'

"Les moyens de défense n'étaient guère meilleurs sur les autres points de la frontière de l'Afghanistan. Le petit fortin de Kohsan, situé près de la frontière Persane et représentant selon le Colonel MacGregor un poste de première importance au point de vue stratégique, ressemblait à un amas de ruines et provoqua de sa part l'exclamation suivante: 'Mais que peut-on attendre d'un Souverain pareil à Shir-Ali-Khan, qui s'empare de tous les revenus de son pays et en dispose pour ses besoins personnels.'

"De cette manière, à proximité du Heriroud, la frontière réelle entre l'Afghanistan et les steppes des Turcomans se composait d'une ligne de hauteurs fermant au nord la vallée de Hérat et formant une des arêtes de la chaîne de montagnes du Paropamise,

et cette circonstance, d'accord avec les indications, assez précises, citées plus haut, par rapport au point frontière sur le Mourgab, suffisait pour écarter les principales difficultés de la délimitation des frontières, qui aurait pu s'effectuer sans aucun obstacle, si les deux parties intéressées avaient envisagé la question avec l'impartialité et la sincérité désirables. Malheureusement, cette affaire a pris une autre tournure, tout à fait inattendue. Les journaux Anglais avaient commencé à affirmer avant ce revirement que l'Émir Abdourrahman-Khan devait occuper l'oasis de Pendjdé et y construire un fort imposant pour garantir la tranquillité de ses possessions et au mois d'Août dernier, l'Émir suivait ce conseil amical en prenant effectivement possession de cette localité, et, comme les Saryks n'approuvaient pas cette mesure, les Afghans, assure-t-on, les châtièrent d'une manière assez dure. Il est évident qu'après une infraction aussi flagrante à l'entente de 1873, le départ du Commissaire Russe pour le lieu de sa destination ne pouvait déjà plus répondre à son but primitif; il n'aurait pu aboutir qu'à des discussions infructueuses entre les deux Commissaires et qui auraient obligé ceux-ci en tout cas à se séparer sans avoir obtenu le moindre résultat.

" Il n'est donc pas difficile, d'après tout ce qui précède, de décider sur qui retombe réellement la responsabilité de l'issue défavorable des négociations entre les Cabinets de St. Pétersbourg et de Londres, et il y a lieu d'ajouter en outre que la manière d'agir du Commissaire Anglais ne pouvait que rendre plus vive encore l'impression désavantageuse que l'occupation du Pendjdé par les Afghans devait produire sur le Gouvernement Russe. Ayant visité cette contrée vers la fin de l'année dernière, le Général Lumsden, comme le constatent les dépêches adressées de son camp aux journaux de Londres, indiquait aux Afghans comment ils devaient se conduire à l'égard des Saryks, engageait ceux-ci à servir fidèlement l'Émir d'Afghanistan et distribuait de riches présents aux Chefs de cette tribu. L'infraction à l'entente de 1873 commis par les Afghans avait reçu de cette manière l'approbation du Délégué que le Gouvernement Anglais avait muni de pleins pouvoirs pour la délimitation des frontières.

" Les faits qui précèdent permettent de résoudre la question de savoir jusqu'à quel point sont fondées les prétentions des Anglais affirmant que la localité de Poulikhatoum, qu'un détachement de troupes Russes a occupée, appartiendrait aux Afghans, quand elle se trouve située à 80 verstes au nord de la chaîne de collines qui forme, d'après le témoignage d'un voyageur Anglais compétent, la frontière réelle de l'Afghanistan.

" Il n'y a pas plus de vérité dans l'accusation, portée par les Anglais contre le Gouvernement Russe, de n'avoir cherché qu'un prétexte plausible pour décliner la délimitation, afin de pouvoir continuer la marche en avant dans la direction de l'Afghanistan.

" On sait parfaitement que la possibilité d'un mouvement de ce genre sert de thème favori à certains publicistes Anglais qui se sont fait la réputation d'hommes politiques profonds et clairvoyants en recherchant les moyens de s'opposer aux plans de conquête de la Russie. Nous ne cacherons pas non plus que nous avons aussi parmi nous des gens qui sont convaincus à leur tour que le but définitif de la politique Russe doit consister dans l'anéantissement complet de la puissance Anglaise en Asie. Mais cette opinion est complètement étrangère, non seulement à tous les hommes d'État de la Russie, mais en général à tous ceux qui sont doués de bon sens et qui se rendent compte de ce que toute atteinte portée par la Russie à l'intégrité du territoire de l'Afghanistan provoquerait une série de nouvelles expéditions qui nous entraîneraient à de nouveaux sacrifices tout à fait stériles cette fois.

" La Russie a des problèmes beaucoup plus essentiels à résoudre et en vue de leur heureuse solution il serait fort important pour elle de pouvoir en finir une fois pour toutes avec les conquêtes en Asie et de pouvoir créer en Asie Centrale une frontière permanente solide. Il est impossible de croire que les hommes d'État Britanniques n'aient pas compris cette vérité palpable, et s'ils l'ont comprise, ils auraient dû ne pas créer d'obstacles à la délimitation et prendre à temps les mesures nécessaires pour mettre un frein aux plans ambitieux de l'Émir Abdourrahman Khan, qui sont d'autant moins pardonnables qu'il ne se passe pas dix ans sans que l'Afghanistan devienne le théâtre de révolutions sanglantes, que l'Émir actuel est fort peu populaire dans son pays, qu'il ne peut conserver son trône qu'à la condition d'être soutenu du dehors et que par conséquent la tension de ses rapports avec la Russie ne peut que porter atteinte à son autorité aux yeux de ses sujets. Si l'on admet la justesse de la théorie qui s'est intronisée en Angleterre et d'après laquelle l'Afghanistan doit servir de barrière naturelle pour la sécurité de l'Inde, il ne faut pourtant pas perdre de vue que cette barrière ne peut répondre à sa destination qu'à la condition expresse d'acquérir elle-

même une certaine solidité, dont le gage ne se trouve certainement pas dans l'agrandissement du territoire de l'Afghanistan, mais dans une entente amicale entre la Russie et l'Angleterre, basée sur l'appréciation équitable et impartiale de leurs intérêts respectifs.

"Les Anglais, on ne le sait que trop, ont la plus grande appréhension de voir la frontière Russe se rapprocher par trop de Hérat. Ces craintes ne sont guère fondées, car il est difficile de croire que 30 ou 50 verstes de plus puissent contribuer à accroître la sécurité de Hérat. Mais en admettant qu'il soit impossible de ne pas compter jusqu'à un certain point avec les préjugés nationaux, on peut croire, si les deux parties veulent faire preuve de la plus grande impartialité, qu'il sera possible de tenir compte de ces préjugés nationaux en reculant la frontière Russe quelque peu au nord, pourvu toutefois que le principe de l'indivisibilité des tribus de la même race ne soit pas lésé. Dès qu'on méconnaîtrait ce principe, la délimitation n'atteindrait pas le but qu'elle se propose et n'aboutirait qu'à des réclamations sans fin de la part des deux Puissances."

No. 207.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 2, 11·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, February* 26, 1885.

I HAVE sent Mr. Stephen to Meshed to improve postal arrangements and be in direct communication with the Foreign Office. He is in possession of existing facts, and of my views in regard to them. It is very desirable that I should receive instructions at the earliest possible moment.

No. 208.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 2, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, March* 2, 1885.

MR. STEPHEN reached Meshed yesterday.

No. 209.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 2, 1885.

I HAVE received your telegrams of the 17th, 19th, 22nd, and 23rd ultimo relative to the affairs of the Afghan frontier, and I have to state that your proceedings as therein reported are entirely approved by Her Majesty's Government. As regards your future action, continue to be guided by my telegrams of the 20th and 25th February.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 210.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 2, 1885.

THE Viceroy of India has been informed of the contents of my telegram to you of the 25th ultimo,* with regard to the refusal of the Russian Government to withdraw their advanced posts at Sari Yazi and Zulfikar Pass, and the instructions given to the Russian officers carefully to avoid conflicts with the Afghans; and he has been instructed to inform the Ameer accordingly in such manner as he may consider advisable.

Her Majesty's Government think it best that their advice to the Ameer on the subject should reach His Highness through the Viceroy of India.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE

* No. 199.

No. 211.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 3, 1885.

HER Majesty's Government have received from their Commissioner on the Afghan frontier Reports which will enable them very shortly to reply to the proposals of the Russian Government which were communicated to them by M. de Staal on the 3rd ultimo.

Her Majesty's Government consider that it is of the utmost importance that until an agreement is arrived at no movement of troops should be allowed to take place in disputed territory. With that view Her Majesty's Government have instructed the British Commissioner to inform the Afghan authorities that they must not attack the Russian troops with a view to dislodge them from the positions which they now hold, but that any further advance on the part of the latter should be resisted subject to military considerations. The Afghan authorities have further been informed that their policy should be to maintain the *status quo*, pending the result of the negotiations which are proceeding.

Her Majesty's Government desire that your Excellency will express to the Russian Government their earnest hope that the instructions to the Russian officers on the frontier will be of the most stringent kind.

Your Excellency should point out to M. de Giers that to bring on a collision with the Afghan troops by pushing forward the Russian outposts to a line which is merely assumed by Russia to be the proper frontier and which has in no way been admitted by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of Afghanistan is quite inconsistent with a friendly negotiation, and that Her Majesty's Government cannot be expected to take the responsibility of advising the Afghans to yield indefinitely, and without investigation of the claims of either party, territory which has never been in the possession of Russia.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 212.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 3, 1885.

YOU have already been informed by my previous telegrams that your communications with the Russian Commanders and with the Afghan authorities are approved by Her Majesty's Government, and you should continue to hold similar language.

Her Majesty's Government cannot advise the Afghans to attack the Russian troops in order to dislodge them from the positions they now occupy, but Her Majesty's Government consider that the further advance of the Russians should, subject to military considerations, be resisted by the Afghans.

In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government the policy of the Afghan authorities should be to maintain the *status quo* pending the result of the negotiations which are still proceeding with the Government of Russia.

You are authorized to make a communication in the sense of the above to the Representative of the Ameer.

Her Majesty's Government attach great importance to your remaining in Afghanistan, where your presence may be the means of stopping further advances of the Russian troops and preventing the outbreak of hostilities.

I have to inform you that it has been arranged that the Viceroy shall meet the Ameer in India about the end of the present month, when all these matters will be discussed.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 213.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 4, 1·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 1, 1885.*

I HAVE received following from Colonel Ridgeway at Penjdeh: "It is reported that a Russian General with four guns and infantry is at Yuletan, and intends marching on Pul-i-Khisti, where Russian outpost is. Russians give out they intend to turn Afghan position at Aktuppa.

"Colonel Alikhanoff is seizing sheep belonging to Penjdeh people, and threatens to take 60,000.

"Afghan troops are moving up to support outpost in Penjdeh, as Russian Commanders evidently intend to force hostilities, though Afghans are pacific.

"Colonel Alikhanoff distinctly wrote to me, in reply to remonstrance, that although Russian troops were ordered to occupy Pul-i-Khisti, once established there they should neither go nor fight."

No. 214.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March 4, 1885, 5·5 P.M.*

COMMUNICATE substance of Sir P. Lumsden's telegram of 1st instant* to Russian Government.

No. 215.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, March 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 5, 1885.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of yesterday's date, and to state that I have communicated to M. de Giers the substance of Sir Peter Lumsden's telegram of the 1st instant. His Excellency admits that Russian troops may be making movements within the line which M. de Staal, under instructions from his Government, has recently proposed to your Lordship, but declares that they will on no account go beyond it, and that they will not attack any Afghan troops which they may meet.

M. de Giers expresses the greatest confidence that a collision will be avoided unless the Afghans should attack the Russian troops.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 216.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 6, 2·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 1, 1885.*

FOLLOWING is in reply to your telegram of 10th instant:—

Afghans in December last, dreading further Russian advance from Pul-i-Khatun, established a post in Zulfekar Pass. Although it was reported to me at the time that the Afghan post had been withdrawn from Sari Yazi, it seems that since occupation by Russia of Pul-i-Khatun and Hazrat Imam they have never ceased from patrolling to Sari Yazi, and on Russian patrols pushing on to Gumbazli they established a post of nine men at Sari Yazi, Russians in meantime continuing to patrol to Aimak Jarra.

The Afghans will not stand any nearer approach of Russians to Herat without supporting their posts. A regiment has gone to Bala Murghab, and about 600 cavalry with 2 guns to Meruchak and Chamani Beed to support Penjdeh.

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* No. 213.

No. 217.

M. de Staal to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 9.)

M. le Comte, *Londres, le 7 Mars*, 1885.

UNE légère faute de transcription s'étant glissée dans la copie de la notice que j'ai eu l'honneur de communiquer à votre Excellence avec la dépêche du 16 Janvier* que M. de Giers m'a adressée au sujet de la délimitation de l'Afghanistan, je me fais un devoir empressé de la rectifier et vous serais très obligé de la faire corriger dans la pièce elle-même.

Il est dit à la fin de l'avant-dernier alinéa qui traite du tracé proposé par le Cabinet Impérial, qu'à partir d'un point sis au nord de Meroutchak, "la ligne de démarcation suivrait la crête des hauteurs qui bordent au nord la Vallée du Kaïsor et à l'ouest celle du Sanzalak, et en laissant Andkhoï à *l'ouest* elle rejoindrait Khodja-Saleh sur l'Amou-Daria;" tandis qu'il faut dire: "en laissant Andkhoï à *l'est* elle rejoindrait Khodja-Saleh sur l'Amou-Daria."

J'ai, &c.
(Signé) STAAL.

(Translation.)

My Lord, *London, March* 7, 1885.

A SLIGHT clerical error having slipped into the copy of the notice which I had the honour to communicate to your Excellency with the despatch of the 16th January, which M. de Giers addressed to me on the subject of the delimitation of Afghanistan, I am anxious to correct it, and should be very much obliged if you will have it corrected in the document itself.

It is stated in the last paragraph but one, with reference to the line proposed by the Imperial Cabinet, that, leaving a point situated to the north of Maruchak, "the line of boundary would follow the crest of the heights which border to the north the valley of Kaïssor and to the west that of Sanzalak, and, leaving Andkoi to the west, would reach Khodja Saleh on the Amou-Daria," whereas it should have been, "Leaving Andkhoi to the east, it would reach Khodja Saleh on the Amou-Daria."

I have, &c.
(Signed) STAAL.

No. 218.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 9, 9·35 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 4, 1885.

YOUR telegram of 25th February† received.

Matters remain as reported by me on 1st March. General Komaroff is at Yulatan, and the guns and infantry are said to be coming on with him. I have impressed on the Afghans the necessity of refraining from action.

No. 219.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 9, 5·55 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 4, 1885.

COLONEL RIDGEWAY reports from Penjdeh on the 1st instant: Yesterday a Russian force of 4 guns, 400 infantry, and some Cossacks advanced to Orushtosan; they are said to be coming to-day to Kizl Tappa, where Yulatan post before Ak Tappa now is, and where they have stored supplies.

The Sarikhs are again greatly excited, and are holding meetings to decide what course to adopt. It appears impossible to maintain any longer the passive attitude enforced on Afghans and adopted by Her Majesty's Government. It is reported that 1,000 infantry and 4 breech-loading guns have arrived at Merv, and that strong reinforcements are expected.

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* No. 182. † No. 199.

No. 220.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 9, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador called to-day and read me a telegram which he had received from M. de Giers on the 7th instant to the following effect.

The Russian Government had taken note of Mr. Gladstone's statement in Parliament in regard to the Afghan Frontier question. They could not believe that the present dispute would cause war between the two Empires. If England made it a national question, it was the same in Russia, but that did not exclude (the possibility of) a friendly understanding.

M. de Staal said he was authorized to assure me that his Government had not ceased to endeavour to arrive at such an understanding, apart from military proceedings, and that they would continue to be animated by the same desire.

I told his Excellency that our answer to the despatch of the 16th January would be forwarded to him in a very short time.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 221.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 10, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 6, 1885.

CAPTAINS Maitland and Yate have returned after completing their survey of Badkis.

An Afghan regiment of infantry and one of cavalry should have reinforced Penjdeh yesterday. No further news from that place.

No. 222.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 10, 1885, 5·15 P.M.

WE are anxious to give you full support in present very difficult circumstances.

No. 223.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 12, 2 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 7, 1885.

I HAVE received following from Colonel Ridgeway, at Penjdeh, dated 4th instant:—

"Russians still at Imam. Colonel Alikhanoff, through the Yuletan picket at Pul-i-Khisti, threatening Sariks of Penjdeh that he will advance, and those that do not now help would suffer. He is doing all he can to excite Sariks to rise, endangering thereby British officers residing among them. This Yuletan outpost should be withdrawn. An Afghan regiment of infantry, another regiment of cavalry, and 300 sowars, besides four guns, should have been at Penjdeh yesterday, so that the Afghans are now strong enough to defend themselves, but they are all miserably armed; whilst the Russians, including the newly raised Turkoman levies, are armed with breech-loaders."

No. 224.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, March 13.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 13, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a rumour has just reached me, in a manner which gives me ground for believing it to be true, that a telegram has

been received by the Russian Minister of War from General Komaroff, Commander-in-chief in the Trans-Caspian region, to the effect that for the safety of the Russian troops on the Afghan border it is absolutely necessary that Penjdeh should be taken, and that the General had asked leave to order that place to be attacked. It was added that the Russian Government are now considering what answer should be sent to the above-mentioned telegram.

I cannot, however, believe that they will allow General Komaroff to give such an order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 225.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 13, 1885.

I HAVE received your telegram of to-day's date, stating that a rumour had reached you to the effect that General Komaroff had telegraphed to ask for leave to attack Pendjeh, and that the Russian Government were considering what answer to send.

Her Majesty's Government desire that your Excellency should urge in the strongest manner upon the Russian Government that if this report be true, orders may be immediately given to prevent the proposed attack.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 226.

Earl Granville to M. de Staal.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, March* 13, 1885.

HER Majesty's Government have had under their careful consideration the despatch from M. de Giers on the subject of the Afghan boundary question which you did me the honour to communicate to me on the 3rd ultimo.

The delay which has occurred in replying to this communication has been occasioned by the necessity of referring M. de Giers' proposals to the English Boundary Commissioner, who was awaiting on the spot the arrival of his Russian colleague. Having now been placed in possession of his observations I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency a Memorandum dealing with the points raised in the inclosure to M. de Giers' despatch, and stating the line which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, according to such information as they possess, constitutes the boundary of the territories under the sovereignty of the Ameer and his predecessors on the Throne of Afghanistan.*

Her Majesty's Government have been and continue to be most anxious to settle this question in a friendly manner with the Russian Government, but it would be impossible for them to agree that territories claimed as Afghan, in regard to which the Ameer has been informed that an investigation would be conducted on the spot by Commissioners appointed by the Governments of Great Britain and Russia, shall, without any such inquiry, be declared to be under Russian dominion. This assurance was given to the Ameer in reliance on the agreement come to between the two Governments that such an investigation should take place. Her Majesty's Government are ready on their part to carry into effect this agreement, and they trust that the Russian Government will no longer delay to send their Commissioner to join the British Commissioner.

They are willing, in order to meet as far as possible the wishes of the Russian Government, to consent that the line, which is defined in the accompanying Memorandum, as forming, in their opinion, the boundary of Afghan territory, and the line proposed as the boundary-line in M. de Giers' despatch of the 16th January† should be taken as the northern and southern limits of a zone to which the inquiries of the Commissioners should be restricted.

Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to instruct their Commissioner, taking this zone as a basis, to discuss the question in the most conciliatory spirit, and to endeavour to come to an arrangement which will be satisfactory to the two Governments,

* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 5. † No. 182.

and which Her Majesty's Government in consultation with the Ameer would be justified in accepting.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE

Inclosure in No. 226.

Memorandum in reply to the Memorandum inclosed in M. de Giers' Despatch of January 16, 1885.

HER Majesty's Government have carefully considered the Memorandum inclosed in M. de Giers' despatch of the 16th January, proposing a line of demarcation of the Afghan boundary, in the event of the two Governments being unable to agree upon the limits of a zone of operations.

Before expressing their views on this proposal, Her Majesty's Government think it desirable to refer briefly to the correspondence which has taken place between the two Governments on the subject of the boundary, in order that there may be no misapprehension as to the course they have taken up to the present time in regard to it.

The representations addressed to the Imperial Cabinet by Her Majesty's Government in the spring of last year, arising from the extension of Russian sovereignty over Merv, resulted in the renewal by the Imperial Government of a proposal which was made in 1882 to Earl Granville by Prince Lobanoff for a "settlement of the frontier of Afghanistan from the point where it was left undefined as far as Sarakhs." Adverting to this proposal, which, to use M. de Giers' own words, "had for its object the continuation from Khoja Saleh in a westerly direction of the line of the Afghan boundary which had been agreed upon in 1872-73," the Imperial Cabinet intimated that if the British Government desired to renew the negotiations, that of Russia would willingly consent.

Her Majesty's Government accepted this proposal, suggesting at the same time that the principal points of the frontier-line should be laid down on the spot, and that a joint Commission, which should include an Afghan Representative, should be appointed for that purpose, in sufficient time for the commencement of operations in the ensuing autumn.

The Imperial Government thereupon expressed their readiness to appoint a Commissioner "who should visit, with his British colleague, the countries in question, and seek in concert with him the elements of a frontier-line which would satisfy the respective interests of the two Powers." They objected to the presence of an Afghan official except as an expert to give information when required to the Commission.

Her Majesty's Government proposed to the Russian Government that the Commissioners should meet in the following October at Sarakhs; the Viceroy of India, at the same time, acquainted the Ameer of Afghanistan with the above-mentioned arrangements, requesting His Highness to depute an Afghan official, possessing his full confidence, to the frontier, to assist the British Commissioner.

After some further correspondence, to which it is unnecessary to refer, Her Majesty's Government appointed Major-General Sir Peter Lumsden to be the Queen's Representative on the Commission, and that officer, after receiving instructions, of which the purport was communicated to the Imperial Cabinet, left London for Sarakhs early in September.

Information was received three days after Sir P. Lumsden's departure, from M. de Giers, that the Imperial Cabinet adhered to its wish "not to let pass the present opportunity of removing for ever all ground of misunderstanding or rivalry between the two Powers in Central Asia, and of completing the work of conciliation happily inaugurated in 1872-73;" that arrangements had accordingly been made for the Russian Commissioner, General Zelenoi, "to join Sir P. Lumsden about the 1st (13th) October at Sarakhs, where he would have to come to an understanding with his colleague in regard to the conduct of the work of delimitation;" that he would be "desired to seek, in conjunction with Sir P. Lumsden, the elements of an arrangement of a nature to remove, as far as possible, the motives of misunderstandings and complications."

Thus Her Majesty's Government had every reason to believe that the work of the Commission would proceed without delay, and that any differences of opinion would be either settled on the spot by the Commissioners, or referred, if necessary, to their respective Governments.

To their great disappointment, however, Her Majesty's Government learnt, some weeks after Sir Peter Lumsden's departure from England, from M. de Giers' Memorandum of the 1st October, that General Zelenoi's departure was postponed, and that he would

not be ready to meet Sir P. Lumsden before the 15th January; and the Russian Government at the same time intimated their opinion that the operations of the Commission should be limited to tracing a zone within which the line of demarcation should be agreed upon by the two Governments. The proposal that a zone should be agreed upon by the two Governments before the Commissioners met was first mentioned at a meeting which took place on the 13th October between Sir E. Thornton, General Zelenoi, and M. Zinovieff, and was proposed officially in M. de Giers' Memorandum of the 2nd October.

In order to meet the wishes of the Russian Cabinet in a friendly spirit Her Majesty's Government, although of opinion that it would be best for the Commissioners themselves to decide on the spot what should be the region of their inquiry, agreed to the principle of this new proposal. Her Majesty's Government accepted the northern limit of the zone suggested by the Russian Government, but expressed the opinion that it would be "undesirable to attempt any preliminary definition of the southern limit of the zone."

The Imperial Cabinet now express their fears that, in default of a previous agreement with regard to the extent of the zone of operations, the dispatch of the Commissioners to the spot is likely to result in misunderstanding, and even in failure. In connection with this intimation, they reserve their right to insist that the possessions of the Ameer Shere Ali in 1872-73 shall be adopted as a basis in the approaching demarcation; that the new frontier shall be marked out in conformity with the geographical and ethnographical conditions of the territory to be delimitated; and that the whole tribe of Sarik Turkomans, of which a portion have already made submission to the Russian authorities, shall be included within the Russian sphere of action.

Her Majesty's Government do not, in principle, object to the definition of a zone, though they are unable to accept a limit of exploration extending so far to the south as the line detailed in General Zelenoi's Memorandum of the 26th November.

In regard to the contention of the Russian Government that the possessions of Shere Ali Khan in 1872-73 should form the basis of the present arrangement, Her Majesty's Government have to remark that in their view this principle was abandoned, so far as the north-western portion of the boundary is concerned, in a despatch addressed by Prince Gortschakoff to Count Brunnow on the 7th (19th) December, 1872, in which he said:—

"We will not insist on the principle from which we started—viz., that no districts should be acknowledged as part of Afghanistan but such as had been under the rule of Dost Mahomed Khan, and were at this moment in actual subjection to Shere Ali. In deference to the wish of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, the Imperial Cabinet would be disposed, so far as this portion of the boundary is concerned, to accept the line laid down in Lord Granville's despatch of the 17th October, 1872."

This line, which thus became the sole basis for future discussion, is thus described in that despatch:—

"3. The internal districts of Akcha, Sir-i-pool, Maimena, Shibbergan, and Andkhoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession on the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.

"4. The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian Province of Khorassan is well known, and need not here be defined."

Whilst willing, therefore, as they have already informed the Imperial Cabinet, to leave to the Commissioners full liberty of action in completing the arrangements of 1872-73 by defining the Afghan boundary between the Heri-Rud and Oxus, Her Majesty's Government cannot admit that the boundary should be marked in conformity with geographical and ethnographical conditions, to the exclusion of the question of territorial right or other considerations.

With respect to the remarks of Colonel Macgregor, which are referred to as important in the Memorandum under reply, Her Majesty's Government have to observe that these remarks cannot be taken as having any official or authoritative value. They are simply the casual observations of an officer travelling in a private capacity on what he saw when passing along a limited tract of country, and were recorded under a misconception of the true circumstances of the case, the towers which he mentions being in reality a line of internal defence, and not, as assumed by him, territorial landmarks.

In regard to the questions raised as to the Sarik Turkomans, Her Majesty's Government have to observe that according to the information in their possession Badgheis, including Penjdeh, has formed a part of Afghanistan ever since Afghanistan became a kingdom; that those districts were, as dependencies of Herat, under the rule of Shere Ali Khan; that the tribes who have settled at Penjdeh during the last quarter of a century have fully acknowledged that they are within Afghan territory, that they have paid revenue in some form or other to the Herat authorities; and that a Naib, or Deputy

of the Governor of Herat, has, as a rule, resided amongst them both before and since 1873. When the Ameer, therefore, on account of the approach of the Russian power, began, some considerable time anterior to the Russian occupation of Merv, to establish his hold more firmly on Penjdeh, he was merely exercising rights which he considered to belong to him.

In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the Ameer's title to the sovereignty of the tract in question cannot be vitiated by the presence within his frontier of a tribe the other part of which is in territory now claimed by Russia. It happens not unfrequently on other Asiatic frontiers that tribes are divided by territorial boundaries, and Her Majesty's Government see no reason why a division should be impracticable in the present instance or serious difficulties arise on that account in the case of the frontier now to be demarcated between Russia and Afghanistan.

On these and other grounds Her Majesty's Government think it right at once to say that they are unable to give their adhesion to any understanding by which Penjdeh or other districts claimed as Afghan shall, without inquiry on the spot, be excluded from Afghanistan.

It remains for Her Majesty's Government to deal with the new proposal contained in the concluding portion of M. de Giers' Memorandum, namely, that failing an agreement as to the limits of a zone, the two Governments might endeavour to come to an understanding in regard to an actual line of frontier, the direction of which is described in the following terms:—

"Starting from a point on the right bank of the Heri-Rud about 10 versts south of Zulfikar, the line would pass by Kehrizi Elias and Kehrizi Soumé to the rivulet of Yegri Gueuk, would follow the heights bordering on the right bank of that rivulet to the ruins of Tchéménibid, and thence the chain of hills on the right bank of the Kuschk to Havuzi Khan, whence it would run to a point situated to the north of Meruchak, which would be left to Afghanistan. Starting from this point, the line of demarcation would follow the crest of the heights on the north of the valley of the Kaïsor and on the west of the valley of Sangalak, and leaving Andkhoi to the east would run to Khoja Saleh on the Amou Daria." This line to be conditional on the Ameer undertaking not to build fortifications which might become a menace to the populations on the other side of the frontier.

Her Majesty's Government regret that they are unable to agree to the proposed line or to the conditions annexed to it. According to the information in their possession, the true line of Afghan boundary would run from Shir Tépé, on the Heri-Rud, to Sari Yazi on the Murghab, and thence along the skirts of the cultivation of Maimena and Andkhoi to Khoja Saleh. But, in expressing this opinion, they must add that they have always held, and still hold, that the line of frontier should be traced on the spot with the assistance of the Ameer's officers, and that the British and Russian Commissioners should have full liberty of action in regard to the conclusions at which they may arrive, and the recommendations they may desire to make, after hearing all the evidence which may be adduced as to the question of right, and after examining the country itself. With this view they are prepared to agree that the lines which the two Governments have respectively proposed should be taken as the limits of a zone to which the inquiries of the Commissioners shall be restricted, that is to say, the northern limit of the zone would be a direct line running from Shir Tépé to Sari Yazi, and thence along the northern skirts of the cultivation of Maimena and Andkhoi to Khoja Saleh, while the southern limit would be a line running from a point on the Heri-Rud about 6 miles south of Zulfikâr to Kehrizi Elias and Kehrizi Soumé to the rivulet of Yegri Gueuk, thence to Tchéménibid, and along the chain of hills on the right bank of the Kuschk to Havuzi Khan, thence to a point situated to the north of Meruchak, and thence by the heights which border the valleys of Kaïsor and Sangalak to Khoja Saleh.

Her Majesty's Government entertain the earnest hope that the Russian Government will, in the interests of both countries, agree with them that the arrangement arrived at in May last shall be again considered in full force, and that no further delay shall take place in commencing the work of the Commissioners.

No. 227.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 14, 4 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 9, 1885.*

FOLLOWING is stated to be the strength of the Afghan forces at Penjdeh:—

"4 field guns, brass 9-pounders; 4 mountain train; 140 artillery; 400 regular

cavalry; 500 irregular cavalry; 2 regiments of infantry, about 1,000 in all; with 400 Jezrailchis."

At Zulfikar Pass there are about 200 horsemen.

On the arrival of Afghan reinforcements at Penjdeh, Colonel Alikhanoff's infantry stopped at Hazrat Imam; he has been writing letters to the Sariks of Penjdeh instigating them to rise. The Afghan authorities consider they are now entitled to spread discontent among the Turkoman population.

No. 228.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, March 14.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 14, 1885.*

WITH reference to my telegram of yesterday, in an interview which I had this afternoon with M. de Giers his Excellency assured me that there was no foundation for the rumour which I had the honour to report to your Lordship in that telegram.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 229.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 14, 5·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 10, 1885.*

MATTERS at Penjdeh quiet.

No. 230.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 14, 1885.*

MR. GLADSTONE made a statement in the House of Commons last night to the effect that it has been agreed between this country and Russia that no further advance should be made by the Russian or Afghan forces respectively to points within the debatable or debated ground.

This statement was founded on the assurances recorded in my despatches of the 19th ultimo and 3rd instant,* and on those given in M. de Giers' Memorandum of the 24th February,† and in your telegram of the 5th instant.‡

I have to instruct your Excellency to inquire of M. de Giers whether he agrees that the assurances referred to constitute an Agreement to the effect stated by Mr. Gladstone.

Her Majesty's Government would be glad to receive an immediate answer on the point, as a question will be asked on the subject in Parliament on Monday.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 231.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 14, 1885.*

I HAVE received a telegram from Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden, stating that Colonel Alikhanoff has in written communications been instigating the Saryks of Penjdeh to rise.

I have to request that your Excellency will inform the Russian Government of this fact, and ask that instructions may be sent to Colonel Alikhanoff to desist from such proceedings.

The reply of Her Majesty's Government to the proposals with regard to the boundary contained in M. de Giers' note of the 16th January was forwarded to the

* Nos. 190 and 211. † No. 196. ‡ No. 215.

Russian Ambassador to-day, and I am sending copies to your Excellency this evening by post.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 232.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 5, 1885.*

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 3rd instant, I waited upon M. de Giers, and delivered to him a paraphrase of that telegram in the words of which a copy is inclosed.

His Excellency expressed his satisfaction at learning that he might soon hope for an answer to the communication which had been made to your Lordship by M. de Staal on the 3rd ultimo regarding the Afghan boundary.

M. de Giers, however, declined to take any engagement that the Russian troops should not make movements within the line which had been then proposed to Her Majesty's Government as the boundary of Afghanistan. He said that the Sarik Turkomans claimed all that territory; that they were an independent tribe, who had never been subject to the Ameer of Afghanistan; that when Merv was occupied by the Russian forces the Sariks had offered their allegiance to Russia, which had been accepted by His Majesty the Emperor; and that it had therefore become obligatory upon the Imperial Government to protect them, and at the same time to prevent them from doing any injury to their neighbours, or from giving rise to a collision with the Afghans.

But his Excellency declared, in the most positive manner, that stringent orders had been sent to the Russian officers in command to abstain, by all means, from anything which could cause a conflict, and that he felt great confidence that it would be avoided if the Afghans should be prevented from attacking the Russian troops

Having heard that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff had left St. Petersburgh on the 28th ultimo to return to Tiflis, I asked M. de Giers whether it was true, as reported to me, that the Prince would extend his journey to Merv. His Excellency replied that he did not know what were his precise intentions, but that he had, at the last moment, written to him, urging him to take all possible measures to prevent a collision between the Russian and Afghan troops.

To-day, after receiving your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I called again upon M. de Giers, and communicated to him the substance of Sir Peter Lumsden's telegram of the 1st instant, in a Memorandum, a copy of which I have the honour to inclose. His Excellency repeated to me more or less what he had said to me yesterday with regard to the movement of Russian troops; he said that he had not actually heard of any force having been sent to Ak-Tépé, or being at that place, but he did not doubt that it might be true, as that place was within the line proposed by the Russian Government. But he again assured me that no attack would be made upon the Afghans, and that, though his Government were decidedly of opinion that Penjdeh belonged to the Sarik Turkomans and not to Afghanistan, as it was now occupied by Afghans, no attempt would be made on the part of the Russian authorities to obtain possession of it, but the question at issue would be left for arrangement between the two Governments.

M. de Giers said that he had not heard of any seizure of sheep ordered by Colonel Alikhanoff, but would make inquiries upon the subject.

During the conversation I told his Excellency that personally I had been much surprised at the line of boundary which had been recently proposed to Her Majesty's Government by M. de Staal, and at the extent to which the pretensions of the Imperial Government had now been carried. I reminded him how often we had spoken together at and after the time in 1882, when Prince Lobanoff was instructed to propose the delimitation of the north-western frontier of Afghanistan, and that at that time the idea of both of us had been that the point of departure of the boundary-line from the Persian frontier would be Sarakhs, or some point in its immediate neighbourhood, or perhaps at the point at which the line from Baba-Durmaz would reach the Tedjend, with regard to which I presumed that there was some understanding between the Russian and Persian Governments.

His Excellency did not deny that at that time we had certainly spoken in the

sense I had described; but that he himself had not then been well acquainted with the localities, and that I must remember that these conversations had taken place before Russia had been obliged to occupy Merv, and subsequently to accept the allegiance of, and therefore to protect, the Turkoman tribes connected with Merv. I, however, pointed out to his Excellency that it was not until I was made acquainted with the proposal recently made to Her Majesty's Government that I became aware of the greater extent of the pretensions now put forward by the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 232.

Memorandum given to M. de Giers February 20 (*March* 4), 1885.

REPORTS have been received by Her Majesty's Government from Sir Peter Lumsden which will enable them very shortly to reply to the proposals made by the Russian Ambassador to the Court of St. James' on the 3rd ultimo.

But, in the meantime, it is of the utmost importance that until an agreement is arrived at, no movement of troops should take place in disputed territory. With that view the Afghans have been told by Her Majesty's Government that they must not attack Russian troops with a view to dislodge them from the positions which they now occupy, but that any further advance on the part of the latter should be resisted subject to military considerations. The Afghans have been informed that the *status quo* should be maintained pending negotiations.

Her Majesty's Government have desired Sir E. Thornton to express to the Russian Government their earnest hope that the instructions to the Russian officers will be of the most stringent kind, and to point out that to bring on a collision with the Afghan troops by pushing forward the Russian outposts to a line which is merely assumed by Russia to be a proper frontier, and which has in no way been admitted by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of Afghanistan, is quite inconsistent with a friendly negotiation, and that Her Majesty's Government cannot be expected to take the responsibility of advising the Afghans to yield indefinitely, and without the investigation of the claims of either party, territory which has never been in the possession of Russia.

St. Petersburgh, February 20 (*March* 4), 1885.

Inclosure 2 in No. 232.

Memorandum given to M. de Giers February 21 (*March* 5), 1885.

HER Majesty's Government have received a telegram from Sir Peter Lumsden dated the 1st March, stating that Colonel Ridgeway has reported from Penjdeh a rumour of a Russian General with four guns and infantry is at Yulatan, and intends to march on to Pul-i-kisti, where there is a Russian outpost. The Russians are saying that they intend to turn the Afghan position at Aktuppa. Colonel Ridgeway adds that Colonel Alikhanoff is seizing sheep belonging to the people of Penjdeh, and threatens to take 60,000 of them.

Sir Peter Lumsden states that Afghan troops are moving up to support the outpost in Penjdeh, because the Russian Commanders evidently intend to force hostilities though the Afghans are peacefully disposed. He adds that Colonel Alikhanoff distinctly informed him, in reply to his remonstrance, that although the Russian troops were ordered to occupy Pul-i-kisti, when once they were established there, they would neither go on nor fight.

St. Petersburgh, February 21 (*March* 5), 1885.

No. 233.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 16.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 11, 1885.

DURING a recent visit which I paid to M. de Giers at his office, in conversing about the Afghan boundary question, he referred to a Map* which I had not previously

† See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 2.

seen, and I begged him to let me have a copy of it. He subsequently sent it to me.

The title is, "Map of Afghanistan and the Contiguous Regions," and I have the honour to inclose it. It seems to have been first published in 1881, but the first sheet of it has, as I understand, been corrected up to 1885. In it will be seen the position of the Salt Lakes, to the south of which the line recently proposed by them is drawn.

No. 234.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1885, 5·15 P.M.

SUBSTANCE of reply to M. de Giers' despatch and Memorandum, 16th (28th) January, is as follows:—

"Her Majesty's Government cannot agree to line proposed in that Memorandum or to the condition annexed to it, nor that, without inquiry on spot, Penjdeh or other territories claimed as Afghan shall be excluded from Afghanistan; according to the information in their possession, boundary should run from Shir-Tépé on Heri-Rud to Sari Yazi on Murghab, and thence along skirts of cultivation of Maimena and Andkoi to Khoja Saleh, but they hold that the line should be traced on the spot with assistance of Ameer's officers, and see no ground for determining it by geographical and ethnographical reasons to exclusion of territorial rights; but to meet as far as possible the wishes of Russian Government, they are willing to agree that lines respectively proposed by two Governments should be taken as limits of zone to which inquiries of Commissioners should be restricted, and to instruct their Commissioner to take this zone as a basis, and to endeavour to come to an arrangement satisfactory to both Governments, and which Her Majesty's Government can accept on behalf of the Ameer; they earnestly hope arrangement of May last will be resumed, and that no further delay will take place in commencing the work of delimitation."

No. 235.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, March 16.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 16, 1885.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 14th instant, I have the honour to state that I called upon M. de Giers this morning, and communicated to him the contents of that telegram. His Excellency assured me that the Russian forces will not advance from the positions which they now occupy, provided the Afghans on their side do not advance nor attack, or unless there should be some extraordinary reason for their advancing, such as a disturbance in Penjdeh.

I also acquainted his Excellency with the contents of your Lordship's telegram also of the 14th instant, with reference to which his Excellency declared that the strictest orders had been sent to avoid a conflict by every possible means, and not to incite to a conflict, but he promised that these orders should be repeated to Colonel Alikhanoff.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 236.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1885, 7·30 P.M.

M. DE GIERS has assured Sir E. Thornton that the Russian force will not advance from the positions they now occupy, provided that Afghans do not advance nor attack, or unless there should be some extraordinary reason, such as a disturbance in Penjdeh.

M. de Giers declared that the strictest orders have been sent to avoid a conflict

by every possible means, and not to incite to a conflict, but his Excellency promised that these orders should be repeated to Colonel Alikhanoff in consequence of your telegram of the 9th instant.

No. 237.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, March 16.)

(Extrait.) *St. Pétersbourg, le* 8 *Mars*, 1885.

LE Gouverneur-Général du Turkestan m'annonce que des officiers faisant partie de la Commission Anglaise de Délimitation ont visité la Province de Tcharvilaïet, ou le Turkestan Afghan, où ils auraient passé en revue les garnisons Afghanes, et auraient instamment recommandé aux autorités locales de fortifier quelques points sur la rive gauche de l'Amou-Daria. L'un des officiers en question aurait traversé, avec une escorte armée, le fleuve, et serait passé sur le territoire Boukharien, près de Khélif.

Nous ne pouvons nous empêcher de regretter ces actes, qui ne contribuent qu'à jeter le trouble dans l'esprit des populations de l'Asie Centrale. Rien ne semble les justifier, et ils forment, en outre, un contraste frappant avec l'attitude amicale que nous n'avons cessé d'observer vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre, et les recommandations conciliantes que nous continuons à adresser à l'Émir de Boukhara.

Votre Excellence jugera peut-être utile d'y rendre attentif Lord Granville.

(Translation.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 8, 1885.

THE Governor-General of Turkestan informs me that some officers belonging to the English Boundary Commission have visited the Province of Tcharvilaïet, or Afghan Turkestan, where they reviewed the Afghan garrisons, and strongly recommended the local authorities to fortify some points on the left bank of the Amou-Daria. One of the officers in question crossed the river with an armed escort, and passed over into Bokhara, near Khélif.

We cannot help regretting these proceedings, which only tend to disturb the minds of the population in Central Asia. There seems to be nothing to justify them, and they afford, moreover, a striking contrast to the friendly attitude which we have continually adopted towards England, and to the conciliatory advice which we are still sending to the Ameer of Bokhara.

Your Excellency will perhaps think it advisable to call Lord Granville's attention to this subject.

No. 238.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 17, 6·45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 1[illegible], 1885.

ALL quiet at Penjdeh.

No. 239.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 18, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 14, 1885.

COLONEL ALIKHANOFF reported to have stopped all Sariks' flocks grazing north of Aktuppa, and Sariks or Afghans from proceeding beyond that place; the Sariks are thus deprived of wood supply from down the river.

No. 240.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 18, 1885.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 9th instant, stating that Colonel Alikhanoff has by letters been instigating the Saryks of Penjdeh to rise, and that the Afghan authorities consider that this entitles them to spread discontent among the Turkomans.

I have to request you to caution the Afghan authorities against such proceedings, while Her Majesty's Government are urging the Russian Government to prevent their agents from doing the same as regards the Turkomans of Penjdeh.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 241.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 19, 1885.

I HAVE received a telegram from Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden, in which he states that Colonel Alikhanoff is reported to have stopped all the Sariks from grazing their flocks north of Ak Tépé, and the Sariks or Afghans from proceeding beyond that place; and that the Sariks are thus prevented from obtaining their wood supply from down river.

I have to request that your Excellency will point out to the Russian Government that the exclusion of the Sariks of Penjdeh from exercising their rights of cutting wood and pasturing their flocks in the disputed territory is inconsistent with the maintenance of the *status quo* during the progress of the negotiations, and is, moreover, calculated to stir up disaffection among the people of Penjdeh.

It will be difficult, if such proceedings on the part of the Russian authorities are persevered in, to restrain the Afghans from promoting disaffection amongst the Turkomans who are subjects of Russia.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 242.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 20, 1885, 6·30 P.M.

THE advice which you have given to Afghans, and your communications with Alikhanoff, appear to have been judicious, and any suggestions that you may make to Her Majesty's Government will have their best attention.

No. 243.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 24.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 16, 1885.

I CALLED upon M. de Giers on the afternoon of the 14th instant and mentioned to his Excellency the rumour which I had the honour to report to your Lordship in my telegram of the 13th instant. He expressed great surprise at this rumour, said that of course no such telegram could have reached St. Petersburgh without his having heard of it, and assured me that there could be no foundation for it.

I expressed my satisfaction at this assurance, and pointed out to him that, in my opinion, any such incident as an attack upon Pendjeh would put an end to any possibility of negotiations between the two countries, and might lead to the most disastrous consequences. I felt confidence, however, in his Excellency's repeated declarations that no attack upon Pendjeh, or upon any other Afghan posts, would be allowed; and

I trusted that the most stringent orders to that effect would be repeated to General Komaroff, with instructions to issue them to the officers under his command.

M. de Giers asked me whether I had received the statement I had mentioned to him from Sir Peter Lumsden.

I replied in the negative, and added that the information had been given me in this city.

No. 244.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 17, 1885.*

ON the 15th instant (Sunday), when I had the honour to receive your Lordship's telegrams of the 14th instant, I called upon M. de Giers, but as he had several people with him on business I could not obtain admittance. I therefore wrote to him, and begged that his Excellency would receive me on the following morning. He acceded to my request.

I began by informing him of the statement which had been made by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons on the night of the 13th instant, and I inquired whether he had any objection to make to that statement. His Excellency replied that, as far as he was personally concerned, he could say that he had already informed me that no advance would be made to any point beyond the line which had recently been proposed by M. de Staal as a boundary. I replied that I understood that Russian troops now occupied posts at Pul-i-Khatun, Zulfagar, Ak-Robat, Ak-Tépé, and Pul-i-Khisti, and that his Excellency had more than once assured me that no attack would be made on Penjdeh nor upon any Afghan force unless the Russians were attacked by the Afghans. Would he authorize me to announce to your Lordship that Russian troops would not advance from the positions they now occupy unless the Afghans should on their side advance from their positions.

M. de Giers replied that he would wish on this point to consult the War Department, and, perhaps, to take the orders of the Emperor, before giving me a final answer. I then informed his Excellency that your Lordship had expressed a desire to have an immediate answer, because a question would be asked on the subject in the House of Commons the same evening.

M. de Giers then said that he had no objection to state that the Russian forces would not advance from the positions they now occupy provided the Afghans should not advance nor attack them, or unless some extraordinary circumstance should happen, such as a disturbance in Penjdeh. I inquired whether he had any reason to suppose that any such incident would occur. He replied that there was no special reason for fearing it except that there was a good deal of excitement among the Sarik Turkomans, who were not well disposed towards the Afghans.

This brought me to the contents of your Lordship's telegram of the 14th instant, of which I informed his Excellency by saying that Sir P. Lumsden had telegraphed to your Lordship that Colonel Alikhanoff had been writing letters to the Sariks in Penjdeh, inciting them to rise against the Afghans. M. de Giers asked me if I seriously meant that this was the case. I replied that Sir P. Lumsden had certainly telegraphed to that effect to your Lordship. I repeated the words, and added that I was directed to ask that Colonel Alikhanoff might be instructed to desist from so doing.

M. de Giers declared that if such a proceeding had been employed it was entirely in violation of the orders which had been issued to the officers in the Trans-Caspian, which were not only that all care should be taken to avoid a conflict, but that no measures of incitement should be made use of ("qu'on ne se servirait de moyens d'excitation"). He said that, however much it might be his duty to support the claims of Russia with regard to territory which her Government believed had always belonged to the Turkoman tribes, he would never be a party to such proceedings as Colonel Alikhanoff was now accused of. His Excellency asked me what was the date of Sir P. Lumsden's telegram. I was unable to tell him. He said that it might, perhaps, be anterior to the reception of peremptory instructions which had been given to Colonel Alikhanoff, but that he would take care that they should be repeated to him at once.

M. de Giers again mentioned to me, as he had already done when I saw him on the 14th instant, that the Ameer of Bokhara had sent information that a large Afghan

force was being concentrated on the Oxus, on the frontier of Bokhara, a proceeding which was causing apprehensions in the mind of His Highness.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 245.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 19, 1885.*

I CALLED upon M. de Giers yesterday at his office, when his Excellency informed me that he had submitted the day before to the Emperor the statements which he had made to me on the 16th instant, as reported in my telegram of that day, and that His Imperial Majesty had been pleased to express his approval of them.

M. de Giers had before him telegrams which had just arrived from London, and which reported that your Lordship, in the House of Lords, and the Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, had read my telegram above mentioned. The text of this telegram was also transmitted; it was in German, but, as far as I could judge, it was a substantially correct translation of what I had stated.

M. de Giers also admitted that it was a faithful statement of the declarations he had made to me on the 16th instant, *proprio motú*, which had since received the approval of His Majesty the Emperor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 246.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 21, 1885.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith the accompanying Memorandum regarding the progress of the Russian Trans-Caspian Railway from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 246.

Memorandum respecting the Progress of the Trans-Caspian Railway.

IT has been recently asserted in many of the newspapers, &c., that the extension of the section of the Trans-Caspian Railway from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad is nearly completed.

It appears that the track for this railway is being pushed forward as speedily as possible, but the rails which are to be laid upon it have not yet left St. Petersburgh.

As soon as the navigation of the Baltic opens—*i.e.*, at the end of April—the rails will be shipped to Batoum, on the Black Sea, will thence have to be transported by the Trans-Caucasus Railway to Baku, on the Caspian, then reshipped and sent across the Caspian to Krasnovodsk. From this place another transhipment will be necessary to send them to Michailovsk, the western terminus of the Trans-Caspian Railway.

It will thus be seen that the railway cannot possibly be in order before October next, and will not probably be ready before the end of the year.

No. 247.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 24, 9 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 19, 1885.*

COLONEL ALIKHANOFF continues to threaten Sariks. He has now prohibited them from cultivating Penjdeh lands close to Pul-i-Khisti, on the plea that they are

Russian lands, because he has placed a Yuletan picket there; Colonel Alikhanoff has also ordered Penjdeh Sariks' flocks off their usual grazing ground near Sari Yazi. Otherwise all quiet here.

No. 248.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 24, 1885.

I HAVE received, through the Russian Ambassador, a complaint of British officers reviewing Afghan garrisons in Afghan Turkestan, and recommending the authorities to fortify points on the left bank of the Amoa-Daria, and of one officer having crossed the river into Bokharan territory, near Khelif, with an armed escort.

I transmit to you herewith, for your information and guidance, a copy of the reply which I have sent to M. de Staal on the subject.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 249.

Earl Granville to Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 24, 1885.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh,† stating that the Russian Government have received information through the Ameer of Bokhara to the effect that a large Afghan force was being concentrated on the Oxus, on the frontier of Bokhara.

I have to request that you will inform me whether there is any truth in this statement.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 250.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 24, 1885.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 5th instant‡ on the subject of the Afghan frontier, and I have to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government approve the language, as reported in that despatch, which you used to M. de Giers with reference to the advance of the Russian military posts, and the terms of the Memorandum on the subject which you communicated to his Excellency.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 251.

Earl Granville to M. de Staal.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, March* 24, 1885.

ON the 17th instant your Excellency did me the honour of communicating to me an extract from a letter from M. de Giers dated the 8th instant, in which complaint is made of the conduct of English officers on the Afghan Boundary Commission who are stated to have inspected the Afghan garrisons in the Province of Tcharvilaieb or Afghan-Turkestan, and to have recommended the local authorities to fortify some places on the left bank of the Amir Daria.

One of these officers is also stated to have crossed the river with an armed escort and to have entered the territory of Bokhara near Khélif.

* No. 251. † No. 244. ‡ No. 232.

M. de Giers expresses his regret that these circumstances should have occurred, considers that they are likely to disturb the populations of Central Asia, and points out that they form a striking contrast with the friendly attitude which Russia has constantly taken up towards England.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government cannot admit that British officers have not a perfect right to inspect Afghan troops and to give such advice with regard to frontier defences as they may think desirable. On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government have no hesitation in expressing their regret if their officers have crossed the Oxus into Bokhara. No authority to do this was given by Her Majesty's Government, and strict instruction, will be issued that the territory of Bokhara shall not be entered in future without the concurrence of the Russian authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 252.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 25.)

My Lord, *Bala Murghab, February 3, 1885.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, a copy of the correspondence cited in the margin, regarding the movements of Russian outposts in the direction of Sari-Yazi on the Murghab.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 252.

Kazi Saad-ud-din Khan to Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(After compliments.) *Bala Murghab, January 30, 1885.*

I HAVE received a letter to-day from the Amin-ul-Dowla with a letter from some scouts from which it appears that they met twenty Russian sowars in the neighbourhood of Sari-Yazi, and that a conversation was held with them, and they (the Afghan sowars) forbade them from advancing further.

I have therefore taken the liberty of sending this latter to your Excelleney with a copy of the letter from the scouts.

Report by the Scouts referred to.

To-day, Tuesday, the 27th January, we sent two sowars to Dagh Ali, and we made our preparations to proceed there with the rest of the sowars. At sunrise, after our two sowars had arrived there, they were met by twenty Russian sowars from Hazrat Imam. Our sowars asked them to wait until the arrival of their (the Afghan) leader. But they did not wait, and said that their orders were to go as far as Sari-Yazi and Aimak Jar. At Sari-Yazi they were detained in the Serai by Suliman Beg who sent a sowar to me to Aimak Jar upon which I left with five sowars (for Sari-Yazi). On arrival at Sari-Yazi they were dismounted and sitting on its walls, but on seeing us they mounted their horses and came towards us. When at a distance of a gun-shot they halted and sent an interpreter towards us, and the other sowars dismounted. I left my sowars in the Rubat (Serai) and proceeded towards them with Suliman Beg, Mulla Shamshad Din, and an interpreter. On meeting their interpreter I asked him why they were moving about in Afghan territory to which they had no right. He replied that they were ordered to go as far as Aimak Jar. I replied that they ought not to have proceeded beyond Hazrat Imam or Sanduk Kuchan, and on no account beyond Dagh Ali, and that if they had anything to say I would have gone there, that I would not allow them to go one pace further, but that if they wanted to go by force they were at liberty to do so. In reply they said that they had no orders to fight, but that they would go further if they were allowed to do so, otherwise, they said, they would return. They also said that they would allow us to go to their territory whenever we liked, and they did not understand why we would not allow them to do likewise. I told him that we would neither go to their territory nor allow them to

come to ours. He said that at the end of the month their Chief and our Chief would come and settle the boundary, that for the present our boundary was Aimak Jar, theirs Sanduk Kuchan, and that Sari-Yazi was a neutral zone to which both parties were at liberty to move. I replied that he should inquire from the Turkomans which place was midway between Yulatan and Penjdeh, and abide by what they say. He then said that if we would not allow them to proceed further they would pass the night here and inform their leaders of what had occurred, and take his orders I told them that I would not allow them to pass the night at Sari-Yazi, that they should return to Hazrat Imam, that we would inform our Chief of what had occurred and take his orders.

After this they returned.

We remained at Sari-Yazi until the afternoon and then returned to Aimak Jar, and in consultation with Suliman Beg sent this Report to you.

The Captain has gone to Gumbazli and has not returned yet.

Inclosure 2 in No. 252.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Kazi Saad-ud-din.

(After compliments.) *Bala Murghab, January* 31, 1885.

I HAVE perused your letter of yesterday, sending me a copy of a Report from the Amin-ul-Dowla, that the Afghan picquets had met some Russian soldiers at Dagh Ali in the neighbourhood of Sari-Yazi.

If Dagh Ali is below Sari-Yazi, the action of the Afghan sowars, as detailed in the Report, is not satisfactory. They are in no strength, and certainly for the present your picquets should not patrol further down the river than Sari-Yazi.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

No. 253.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 25.)

My Lord, *Tehran, February* 21, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith précis of letters I have received.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 253.

Meshed, January 24, 1885.

THE Governor-General of Khorassan has obtained sanction from the Shah to cultivate the district of Hashtadan, which lies between Goorian and Sarakhs.

"*Dereghez, January* 13.

"The Russians have extended their telegraph line as far as Kahkaheh, but cannot continue it owing to the want of wood for poles. They have used iron poles near Askabad, and probably they will do the same on this occasion.

"With reference to the statement in my last letter that 1,000 horsemen were going to Merv from Askabad, I have to report that detachments, amounting altogether to about that number, have already passed through this district."

"*Penjdeh, December* 20 *and* 23, 1884.

"It is rumoured among the Saryk Turkomans that a large force, with a good many guns, is on its way to Yuletan and Penjdeh.

"Yesterday a Russian reinforcement of 100 men came to Imam, and now the whole force at that place amounts to 200 men. Provisions are brought from Yuletan and the vicinity of that place under the direction of a Colonel.

"The Russian forces come as far as Aimak-Jorgeh, which is at a distance of about 12 miles from Penjdeh; consequently, the Afghan authorities have issued an order that no Afghan is allowed to approach that place.

"The Afghans have withdrawn their soldiers from Ak Tepeh, and stationed them at a spot 4 miles on this side of that place."

Inclosure 2 in No. 253.

Penjdeh, January 15.

IT is rumoured that a large force, with a good many guns, has been sent to Merv, and that the Commander has received orders to proceed from thence to Yuletan and Penjdeh.

A few days ago three Akhal Turkomans, who were believed to be spies, were seized by the Afghans at Penjdeh and sent over to the Deputy-Governor of Herat, but at Maruchak, on their way to that place, they escaped.

These Turkomans also asserted that the aforesaid force was coming to Yuletan and Penjdeh.

A number of the Saryk Turkomans had gone to collect firewood; on their way back, at Aimak-Jorgeh, about 16 miles to the north of Penjdeh, they were met by fifteen Russian horsemen, who deprived them of their firewood and threatened them with death if they were seen again in that neighbourhood; since then no one from Penjdeh has dared to approach Aimak-Jorgeh.

Yesterday a letter was received from Merv saying that the Russians intend to come and occupy Penjdeh.

Kazi Saad-ud-din, having written a letter to the Ameenud Dowleh telling him to find out whether the Russians had put boundary marks at Gonbedli, the latter immediately sent a special messenger for the purpose, who has now returned and reports that there are two places of that name, the one about 50 miles and the other about 120 miles from Penjdeh, and that the Russians have set up boundary marks at both.

The Russians at Imam send every two or three days a detachment of ten horsemen to the nearer Gonbedli to obtain news and examine the boundary marks.

Two hundred frontier guards, who had recently arrived here, have been sent to Ak Teppeh. Probably they will be unable to remain at that place owing to the want of provisions.

Sari Khan and the Russian Colonel who is with him are numbering the inhabitants of Yuletan.

Mohamed Amin Khan, the Chief of the guards at Sanduk-Ajen, had come to Penjdeh on business. Two days after his arrival here, he received information that twenty Russian horsemen had come to his post. He immediately left Penjdeh with the intention of going to Sanduk-Ajen to inquire into the matter. I have received no information as to whether the Russians were merely passing through or had come to establish themselves at that place.

About seven days ago Sara Khan left Yuletan. It is not known whether he is going to Merv or to Askabad.

A merchant from Urganj who has come to Penjdeh, states that a Russian force in Shurak-Khan was about to leave for Merv, and that the Russians were talking about a fight which they expect to take place at Kafeer-Kaleh, near Herat.

Boojnoord, January 15.

It is reported that the Russian authorities are engaging labourers with the object of pushing forward the construction of the railroad from Kizzil Arvat to Askabad, and that the work on that line will be resumed about the end of March.

No. 254.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 26, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador told me this afternoon that he was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of my note of the 13th instant respecting the Afghan Boundary question, and to say that his Government would reply to it after careful consideration.

I told M. de Staal that I trusted that there would be no unnecessary delay, as I believed the Russian Government were in possession of all the facts, which we had not been when we received his communication of the 3rd ultimo, to which my note was a reply. I added that expedition was the more desirable as excitement appeared to be increasing in both countries.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 255.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 27, 10·8 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March 20, 1885.*

COLONEL RIDGEWAY reports on the 16th instant that a portion of Yulatan post at Kizil Tépé attempted to push through Afghan intrenchments, but were pushed back. One of them fired when retiring, but apparently not at Afghans. On 18th 1,500 Russian infantry reached Yulatan, in addition to 1,100 infantry already with Komaroff at Hazrat Imam.

Further attempts will be made by Russia to raise Sariks, who in meantime have, however, received conciliatory letters from Ameer, which Colonel Ridgeway says have had happiest effects; position, however, from increase of the Russian force, has again become critical.

No. 256.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 27, 1885.*

HER Majesty's Government are strongly impressed with the desirability of putting an end to the excitement with regard to the Afghan frontier, which seems to be increasing, both in this country and in Russia, consequent upon rumours, some true and some unfounded, as to preparations on either side.

The importance to both countries of coming to a speedy as well as friendly settlement cannot be overrated. Nothing savouring of a menace from either would be worthy or judicious on the part of two great and spirited nations.

The necessity of making any declarations as to the result of a failure of negotiations happily does not exist.

Her Majesty's Government have had opportunities of declaring in Parliament their adherence to the Imperial and traditional policy of this country with regard to India and Afghanistan—a policy long upheld by both the great political parties in the State without distinction.

This policy, as is well known, includes engagements to the Ameer, binding Her Majesty's Government to regard as a hostile act any aggression upon his territory, of which Herat is a salient point.

Her Majesty's Government feel sure that the Imperial Russian Government will readily understand that, in circumstances such as those of the present moment, the Ameer, at the head of a Government comparatively feeble, is entitled to expect from the Government of the Queen the most explicit assurances.

On the other hand, the Russian Government has spontaneously disclaimed any threatening intentions against Herat.

Her Majesty's Government are therefore in a favourable position—which, however, circumstances independent of the will of the two Governments might at any moment change—for coming to a settlement satisfactory and honourable to Russia, to the Ameer, and to this country.

Her Majesty's Government desire your Excellency to use these arguments, and any others which will suggest themselves to your judgment, in order to induce M. de Giers to obtain the Emperor's consent to an early reply being sent to my note to M. de Staal of the 13th instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 257.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 27, 1885.*

I HAVE received a telegram from Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden informing me that in a Report dated the 16th instant Colonel Ridgeway states that a portion of the Yuletan post at Kizil-Tépé had attempted to push through the Afghan intrench-

ments, but that they had been pushed back; that one of them had fired when retiring, though the shot was apparently not directed against the Afghans.

I have to request your Excellency to communicate the above intelligence to the Russian Government, and to represent to them urgently at the same time the danger of collision arising out of such proceedings.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 258.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 27, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, March* 27, 1885, 5·57 P.M.

I LEARN that further reinforcements have arrived at Merv from the Oxus, and that the Russian garrison, about 1,200 strong, has moved south, either up the Heri-Rud or in direction of Murghab.

No. 259.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 28, 9·30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 23, 1885.

IN your Lordship's telegram of the 16th instant,* mention is made of boundary along skirts of cultivation of Maimena. The interests of the inhabitants of Penjdeh and Uzbek are pastoral, not agricultural, and their foraging grounds extend some 25 miles north of the line of wells in latitude of Ak Tupa, and are of vital importance.

No. 260.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 28, 10·20 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 24, 1885.

COLONEL RIDGEWAY rejoined me here, Captain Yate having gone to Penjdeh.

No. 261.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 28, 1·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 24, 1885.

GOVERNOR of Herat has just reported 400 Russian cavalry are reported to be starting for Akrobat from Sarakhs, and he proposes to send two companies of infantry and 100 cavalry to reinforce his post there and Zulfagar Pass.

No. 262.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received by telegraph, March* 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 28, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, at an interview which I had this afternoon with M. de Giers, I communicated to his Excellency the substance of your telegram of yesterday, and that his Excellency expressed his entire acquiescence in the contents of that document.

He also informed me that he has to-day forwarded to M. de Staal the answer to your Lordship's note of the 13th instant, and that he thinks that in that note he has met all the observations made in the above-mentioned telegram. He has not acquainted me with the exact nature of his answer, but I infer that it will ask that

* No. 234.

the zone may be somewhat extended on both sides. M. de Giers expressed his conviction that the meeting of the Commission would allay the present excitement, and added that if it were to take place, in order to save time, General Komaroff might be sent at once from Askabad to join Sir Peter Lumsden, to be followed by General Zelenoi.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 263.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 30.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March 23, 1885.*

I HAVE been making inquiries with regard to the progress which is being made in the construction of the railway from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad. I have learnt upon good authority that the permanent way is nearly completed; but it would appear that the rails are not yet there; that they are to be sent from here; that they cannot be dispatched till the navigation opens; and that they will then be sent by sea to Batoum or Poti, thence by rail to Baku, and across the Caspian.

I learn that the rolling-stock required for this railway is being constructed at Dantzig, and will also be sent round by sea.

It is evident that these operations must take some time, and I can hardly suppose that the railway will be in working order before October next.

No. 264.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(Received March 31.)

My Lord, *Kali Maur, February 19, 1885.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith to your Lordship copies of a letter which, in accordance with my instructions, Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway addressed to Colonel Alikhanoff from Penjdeh, and of his reply.

I have likewise the honour to inclose a letter which I have thought it my duty to address to the latter to-day, pointing out the grave consequences that may arise from his action in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 264.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to Lieutenant-Colonel Alikhanoff.

Sir,

THE Afghan authorities in Penjdeh having reported to General Sir Peter Lumsden, Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioner for the Delimitation of the Afghan Frontier, that a collision had taken place on the 8th instant between the Russian and Afghan patrols, in consequence of the advance of the former to Sari Yazi and Aimak Chari, Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioner has sent me to ascertain the facts. I am also authorized to make some friendly arrangement whereby the patrols and pickets of each side should in future not transgress certain fixed limits, pending the decision of the Joint Commission which is about to meet. I have communicated with the officer commanding at Kila Brun, but he is unable to meet me. Meantime, the inquiries I have made have convinced me that serious misunderstanding will occur if the Russian and Afghan troops continue to come into contact.

I therefore suggest, Sir, that you should depute some officer to meet me, and that he be authorized to effect some arrangement with me. It seems that the right of the Afghans to patrol beyond Aimak Chari is disputed, but I find that before the Russian occupation of Kila Brun the Afghans patrolled up to the latter place. Perhaps the fairest settlement would be for the tract between Sanduk Kuchan and Aimak Chari to be unoccupied and unpatrolled by either side. If, then, you would direct your patrols not to advance beyond Sanduk Kuchan, which seems to be at a convenient distance from your camp at Imam Hazrat, I, on behalf of the Ameer of Afghanistan, will

arrange that the Afghan pickets at present at this place be moved to Orush Toshan, and that the Afghan pickets do not advance beyond Aimak Chari. Of course this arrangement would be merely provisional, and would not prejudice any claim which either side may advance before the Joint Commission.

I now proceed to Ak Tuppa, which, as you are aware, is only two or three hours' ride from Aimak Chari, and shall be greatly obliged if you will send your reply there at your earliest convenience, as I have orders to join Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioner before he meets General Zelenoi.

(Signed) J. W. RIDGEWAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 264.

Lieutenant-Colonel Alikhanoff to Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway.

(Translation.) *February* 6 (18), 1885.

I HAVE to acknowledge receipt of your welcome letter, which gave me great pleasure. I have very friendly feelings towards the English and the Afghans, and I hope matters may be amicably settled in a friendly and equitable spirit. When the Commissioners have met and a decision has been arrived at, I shall with pleasure give up not only any claims to Penjdeh, but Merv itself. At present, however, I have advanced because I have been ordered to let the Russian outposts occupy Aimakh Char, and to let no Afghans go beyond Pul-i-Khisti. You are yourself in the service, and you know that a Royal order must be obeyed, whatever it may be. If you will be good enough to recall your outposts on receipt of this letter no difficulty will arise, and we shall remain on friendly terms; if not, I have been ordered to make your outposts retire.

Inclosure 3 in No. 264.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Lieutenant-Colonel Alikhanoff.

Sir, *Kali Maur, February* 19, 1885.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL RIDGEWAY has laid before me your letter of yesterday. I must express my surprise at the tone in which it is written, and add that after conversation with the Ameer's Representative yesterday, I find that I have exhausted all means of restraining the Afghans any longer from adopting the measures they may deem necessary for the defence of Afghan rights.

As Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway informed you in his letter, I have succeeded in inducing the Afghan military authorities to withdraw their outposts to Orush Doshan, and orders to that effect will to-day be sent to the officer commanding the Afghan outpost, and he will be told not even to patrol beyond that place.

I think it right, however, to warn you that it will be impossible for me to induce the Afghans to make any further concessions, or to restrain them any longer; and to point out that in the event of any Russian patrols or troops advancing beyond Aimak Jarra conflict will inevitably take place. It seems incredible that at a moment when, as it appears from a telegram received last night, the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Czar is carrying on friendly negotiations with the Government of Her Majesty the Queen, His Imperial Majesty should have authorized you to make war against Afghanistan at a time of peace; for if it had not been for Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway having addressed you by letter it was evidently your intention to commence hostilities without warning, and without assigning any reason whatever for doing so.

Finally, I have the honour to inform you that I have telegraphed to London, pointing out the grave crisis which has arisen by your contemplated action, and I only trust that you will hesitate before entering on a course which, besides embroiling Russia in a conflict with Afghanistan, may cause a rupture between the at present friendly Powers of England and Russia.

I have ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Ridgeway to remain at Penjdeh, and to give his earliest attention to any future communication which you may think it desirable to make.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

No. 265.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 31, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 25, 1885.

CAPTAIN YATE reports, on the 22nd, from Penjdeh, that Russian column, 1,500 strong, under General Komaroff and Colonel Alikhanoff, has advanced to Urush Doshan. They have given out their intention to take Ak-Tépé and Penjdeh. This points to a general forward movement in connection with advance of cavalry to Akrobat, reported yesterday.

No. 266.

Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received March* 31, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Gulran, March* 27, 1885.

CAPTAIN YATE reports from Penjdeh on evening of 26th as follows:—

"Russian troops now encamped in front of Ak-Tépé. A troop of about 100 Turkoman sowars came in to Kizil-Tépé and advanced towards Pul-i-Khisti. The Afghan picket there warned them not to advance, and they at once retired. This Russian advanced force at present estimated at 900 infantry and 400 cavalry.

"Afghan guns in position, and troops prepared to resist."

Captain Yate will do everything in his power to prevent hostilities and to keep Sariks quiet.

No. 267.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(*Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, April* 1.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le* 15 *Mars*, 1885.

J'AI pris les ordres de Sa Majesté l'Empereur au sujet de l'expédition de votre Excellence du 3 (15) courant et de la communication de Lord Granville qui s'y trouvait annexée.

Sa Majesté a ordonné de la soumettre à un examen attentif.

Vous trouverez dans la notice ci-jointe nos observations sur le Mémorandum Anglais qui accompagne la dépêche de Lord Granville. Ces observations portent sur des questions d'une haute importance, sur les principes mêmes qui doivent servir de base à un arrangement équitable entre les deux parties. Nous ne saurions laisser subsister le moindre malentendu à ce sujet, et je crois, en conséquence, devoir vous engager à signaler sans retard à l'attention du Principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires Étrangères les motifs qui nous empêchent de nous associer aux conclusions contenues dans son Mémorandum et à lui remettre copie de notre notice.

Lord Granville continue à se montrer impatient de voir notre Commissaire pour la délimitation arriver sur les lieux, et il n'admet point qu'une entente sur les points en litige puisse s'opérer en dehors d'une enquête locale. Nous n'avons nullement renoncé à l'idée de cette enquête, mais la zône d'investigations que vient de nous proposer Lord Granville s'écarte sur plus d'un point des conditions d'impartialité voulues pour pouvoir être acceptée par nous et elle ne répond pas non plus aux circonstances locales du moment.

Cependant Mr. Gladstone ayant loyalement reconnu et constaté devant le Parlement que les territoires en litige, supposés jusqu'à présent appartenir à l'Afghanistan, étaient en réalité l'objet de contestations, il nous semble que les vues des deux Gouvernements sont suffisamment rapprochées pour offrir un terrain pratique à des négociations amicales.

Si le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique voulait revenir à l'idée d'une zone d'investigations nous ne pourrions accepter que celle que nous avons proposée dès le début. Mais, vu les changements survenus dans la situation de ces contrées, nous croyons que les recherches et les études à faire dans un rayon aussi étendu entraîneraient une grande perte de temps, sans modifier les points de vue réciproques et sans autoriser l'espoir d'une entente finale des Commissaires qui en définitif devraient soumettre leurs divergences à la décision des deux Gouvernements.

Il nous paraît plus pratique d'assigner aux investigations de la Commission les

territoires situés sur la ligne que nous avons indiqué en dernier lieu au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique dans le sincère désir de concilier les intérêts des deux parties.

Dans ces conditions si elles étaient acceptées par le Cabinet de Londres, la Commission pourrait se réunir sans délai et procéder sur place à ses travaux avec les chances d'une prompte solution.

Vous êtes autorisé à transmettre cette proposition à Lord Granville.

Veuillez réitérer à son Excellence que le Cabinet Impérial n'a absolument aucune des intentions qu'on se plaît à lui attribuer. Il n'a aucun projet hostile relativement à aucune partie de l'Afghanistan, et désireux de mettre ses relations amicales avec l'Angleterre à l'abri de tout malentendu, c'est dans l'établissement d'une bonne frontière entre les sphères d'influences respectives des deux Puissances qu'il voit le moyen le plus efficace de réaliser le but.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburgh, March* 15, 1885.

I TOOK the orders of His Majesty the Emperor with reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 3rd (15th) instant and to Lord Granville's communication inclosed therein.

His Majesty ordered that it should be attentively considered.

You will find in the annexed paper our observations on the English Memorandum inclosed in Lord Granville's despatch. These observations relate to questions of great importance to the actual principles which must furnish the basis of an equitable arrangement between the two parties. We could not allow the slightest misunderstanding to exist on this subject, and I have, therefore, to request you to bring to the attention of the Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, without delay, the motives which prevent us from accepting the conclusion contained in his Memorandum, and to give him a copy of our Memorandum.

Lord Granville is still anxious to see our Boundary Commissioner reach the spot, and he does not admit that an understanding on the points under discussion can be arrived at independently of a local inquiry. We have in no wise given up the idea of this inquiry, but the zone of investigation which Lord Granville now proposes in more than one particular departs from the conditions of impartiality desired to render our acceptance possible, and, moreover, is incompatible with local circumstances at the present moment.

However, as Mr. Gladstone loyally recognized and stated in Parliament, that the territories in dispute, supposed up to now to belong to Afghanistan, were really the subject of discussion, it appears to us that the views of the two Governments harmonize sufficiently to afford a practical basis for friendly negotiations.

If Her Majesty's Government wish to return to the idea of a zone of investigation, we could only accept the one which we have proposed from the outset; but in view of the changes which have taken place in the state of affairs in these districts, we think that the investigations and inquiries necessary within so extensive a radius would entail a great loss of time without modifying the opinions of either party, and without leading to the hope of a final understanding between the Commissioners, who in the end would have to submit their differences to the decision of the two Governments.

It appears more practical to us to assign to the investigations of the Commission the territories situated on the line which we indicated lastly to Her Majesty's Government in the sincere desire to reconcile the interests of the two parties.

If these conditions were accepted by the Cabinet of London, the Commission might meet without delay and proceed to their labours on the spot with the prospect of a prompt solution.

You are authorized to transmit this proposal to Lord Granville.

Be good enough to repeat to his Excellency that the Imperial Cabinet have absolutely none of the intentions which are attributed to them. They have no hostile project relative to any part of Afghanistan, and being desirous of protecting their friendly relations with England from all misunderstanding, they believe the best means of arriving at this end is to establish a good frontier between the respective spheres of influence of the two Powers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

Inclosure in No. 267.

Observations au sujet du Mémorandum joint à la Note adressée par Lord Granville à M. de Staal, en date du 1 (13) *Mars*, 1885.

PAR sa note en date du 1er (13) Mars dernier, M. le Comte de Granville a transmis à l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Londres un Mémorandum qui sert de réponse à celui qui accompagnait la dépêche adressée par le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères à M. de Staal en date du 16 Janvier, au sujet du tracé de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan.

La marche des négociations entre les deux Gouvernements, ainsi que les motifs qui ont réglé l'attitude du Gouvernement de Russie dans cette question ayant été exposés en détail dans le Mémorandum ci-dessus mentionné du 16 Janvier, le Cabinet Impérial croit pouvoir se borner aujourd'hui à ne relever que quelques-unes des observations contenues dans la communication de M. le Comte Granville et qui pourraient selon son avis donner lieu à des malentendus.

1. Le Mémorandum Britannique fait entre autres allusion à la proposition que l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Londres avait été chargé de faire en 1882 au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine relativement au réglement de la frontière Afghane depuis le point où elle avait été laissée non définie jusqu'à Sarakhs. Cette proposition avait été motivée par une proposition précédente du Gouvernement Britannique, laquelle avait pour objet l'opportunité d'une entente entre les deux Puissances au sujet de leur politique et de leur position mutuelles en Asie Centrale. M. le Comte de Granville ayant suggéré, entre autres, à l'Ambassadeur de Russie, la nécessité d'un arrangement entre l'Angleterre, la Russie, et la Perse au sujet du tracé d'une ligne-frontière entre les possessions Persanes et la Turcomanie depuis Baba-Dormaz jusqu'au point où la frontière Persane rejoint celle de l'Afghanistan aux environs de Hériroud, le Prince Lobanow fut chargé de répondre au Cabinet de Londres—

1. Qu'une délimitation de la frontière entre nos possessions et celles de la Perse était une question qui ne pourrait concerner exclusivement que cette Puissance et la Russie et dans laquelle nous ne saurions admettre aucune ingérence étrangère ; et

2. Que si l'Angleterre désirait pourtant contribuer à la consolidation de la paix dans les contrées qui offrent principalement le danger de conflits, le Cabinet Impérial serait tout disposé à lui prêter son assistance et à entrer en négociations sur une ligne de démarcation à partir de Khodja-Saleh, sur l'Amou-Daria jusqu'aux environs de Sarakhs. Le territoire s'étendant à l'est du Hériroud n'ayant pu être exploré avant cette époque, à cause de l'absence complète de sécurité dans ces contrées, le Cabinet Impérial avait cru devoir indiquer Sarakhs comme un point dont la position géographique était tout à fait connue, mais en même temps il avait invité le Prince Lobanow à déclarer au Cabinet de Londres que la ligne-frontière à tracer devait coïncider avec la limite qui sépare les possessions Afghanes du territoire des Turcomans indépendants de l'Afghanistan et les tribus des Salors et des Saryks de celles des Djémchidis et des Hézarés. Le Prince Lobanow avait également été chargé de signaler au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine que le Cabinet Impérial poursuit à l'égard des Turcomans le même but que l'Angleterre poursuit à l'égard des tribus Afghanes voisines des Indes et de Béloudjistan, c'est-à-dire à l'établissement solide de la sécurité de ses possessions et d'un ordre de choses pacifique sur sa frontière. Le Cabinet de Londres n'ayant pas jugé possible à cette époque de donner suite à la proposition du Cabinet Impérial, l'Ambassadeur de Russie s'était trouvé de son côté dans l'impossibilité de faire usage des instructions dont il avait été muni à cet égard.

2. Si le retard involontaire qu'a subi le départ du Général Zelenoi pour Sarakhs a été un objet de désappointement pour le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, ce n'est pourtant pas cette circonstance, mais bien l'envahissement de Pendjdé par les Afghans qui a empêché les négociations de suivre leur cours naturel. Ayant eu soin de prévenir à temps le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine des conséquences défavorables qu'un tel envahissement ne pouvait manquer d'amener, le Cabinet Impérial s'est vu placé dans la nécessité d'aviser à la sauvegarde de ses droits, et c'est dans ce but qu'il a cru devoir demander que les arrangements précédémment convenus entre les deux Gouvernements au sujet des attributions de la Commission soient complétés par une définition préalable des limites de la zone d'investigations. Les faits n'ont pas tardé à démontrer le bien-fondé des appréhensions du Cabinet Impérial quant aux difficultés que devait éprouver une entente directe entre les Commissaires respectifs à ce sujet. Le Gouvernement Britannique n'a pas jugé possible d'adopter le projet de

zone dressé par les soins du Général Zelenoi, et le projet qu'il vient de proposer à son tour dans son Mémorandum du 1er (13) Mars, se trouve sur plus d'un point en désaccord avec la manière de voir du Cabinet Impérial, et les résultats des investigations exécutées par son ordre. Le Cabinet Impérial croit tout à fait superflu d'insister sur la gravité des inconvénients qui se seraient produits si dès le début la Commission s'était heurtée à des obstacles insurmontables.

3. Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique affirme que le principe, suivant lequel l'état des possessions de Shir Ali Khan en 1872-73 aurait dû servir de base à l'arrangement présent, aurait été abandonné pour ce qui concerne la partie nord-ouest de la frontière, et il se réfère à cet effet à un passage de la dépêche adressée par le Prince Gortchacow au Comte de Brunnow en date du 7 (19) Décembre, 1872. Le Cabinet Impérial se voit dans l'impossibilité d'admettre cette interprétation. En donnant son adhésion à un tracé de la susdite partie de la frontière, indiquée dans la dépêche du Comte Granville du 17 Octobre, 1872, et qui s'écartait du principe ci-dessus exposé, le Cabinet Impérial n'a nullement entendu abandonner le principe même, ainsi qu'il résulte du passage de la dépêche du Prince Gortchacow, qui fait suite au paragraphe cité par le Comte de Granville: "Par déférence pour le Gouvernement de Sa Majeste Britannique, le Cabinet Impérial serait disposé à adhérer pour cette partie des frontières au tracé indiqué dans la dépêche le Lord Granville."

Eu égard à ces circonstances le Cabinet Impérial ne saurait reconnaître aujourd'hui aux Afghans le droit d'étendre leur souveraineté sur des territoires qui n'avaient pas été désignés dans l'Arrangement de 1872-73. D'ailleurs, dans son Mémorandum du 9 Juin, 1884, ainsi que dans plusieurs de ses communications ultérieures, le Cabinet Impérial a eu soin de signaler à l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre que ce n'est que sur la base du principe, consacré par l'Arrangement de 1872-73, qu'il croyait pouvoir procéder à la délimitation de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan, et de son côté le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine n'a élevé aucune objection contre cette condition.

4. Sans attribuer un caractère officiel aux observations contenues dans l'ouvrage du Colonel Macgregor au sujet de la partie nord-ouest de la frontière Afghane, le Cabinet Impérial ne saurait pourtant méconnaître l'importance qu'offrent les informations fournies par un témoin oculaire, et surtout par un officier supérieur de l'armée Britannique, initié aux questions politiques se rattachant à l'Asie Centrale et qui, ainsi que son ouvrage en fait foi, s'est donné pour tâche de rechercher les moyens propres à assurer les intérêts Britanniques en Asie contre des projets ambitieux qu'il prête à la Russie. Ces conditions sont de nature à placer l'impartialité des informations ci-dessus mentionnées à l'abri de tout soupçon. Les termes dans lesquels est conçu le passage de l'ouvrage du Colonel Macgregor, cité dans le Mémorandum du Cabinet Impérial du 16 Janvier dernier, suffisent pour démontrer qu'il y est question d'une ligne-frontière et non d'une ligne de défense intérieure, ainsi que le Gouvernement Britannique est porté à le croire.

5. L'oasis de Pendjdé n'a jamais fait partie de la province Afghane de Badghis, et la population Turcomane de cette localité a de tout temps joui d'une complète indépendance, comme le prouve entre autres les nombreuses incursions commises préalablement à l'établissement de l'autorité Russe à Merv par les Saryks de Pendjdé, sur le territoire de leurs voisins et entre autres dans le Khorassan, ainsi que les actes de représailles qu'ils avaient eus à subir à leur tour. Le voyageur Russe, M. Lessar, a librement parcouru Pendjdé au printemps de l'année dernière et il n'y a pas trouvé de traces de la domination Afghane. A cette occasion, le Cabinet Impérial ne croit pas non plus superflu de se référer aux deux Mémoires qui ont été échangés au mois d'Avril 1884 entre l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique et le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Eu égard aux négociations amicales poursuivies entre les deux Gouvernements, Sir E. Thornton avait témoigné le désir que des ordres fussent adressés aux autorités de la Province Transcaspienne pour empêcher les Agents Russes de visiter les localités faisant partie du territoire Afghan. Tout en se déclarant prêt à se conformer à ce désir, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères s'est fait un devoir de prévenir l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre, dans une notice datée du 16 Avril, 1884, de la nature des rapports qui s'étaient établis entre les Turcomans de Pendjdé et les autorités de la Province Transcaspienne, et l'envoi de deux Agents Russes chargés de visiter Yolotan et, en cas de necessité, Pendjdé. Cette communication n'a pas provoqué la moindre observation de la part du Gouvernement Britannique.

L'ensemble des considérations ci-dessus exposées tend à démontrer qui l'envahissement de Pendjdé par les Afghans, qui s'est effectué dans le courant de l'été dernier, constitue un acte incompatible avec les principes de l'Arrangement 1872-73, qui

devaient aussi servir de base à un arrangement ayant pour objet la fixation définitive de la frontière nord-ouest de l'Afghanistan.

6. Ainsi qu'il résulte du Mémorandum Anglais du 1er (13) Mars, l'Asie offre plus d'un exemple du partage des tribus par des frontières territoriales, et le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine ne voit aucune raison à ce qu'un tel partage soit considéré comme impraticable dans le cas présent ou qu'il soit de nature à donner lieu à de graves difficultés.

Le Cabinet Impérial croit devoir y répondre que de nombreuses expériences lui ont démontré les inconvénients d'un tel état de choses; qu'il n'a pas cessé de les éprouver tant que les Turcomans de Merv, congénères de ceux d'Akhal, n'étaient point soumis à l'autorité Russe, et qu'il continue à les éprouver sur l'Atrek, où les tribus habitant les deux contrées de la rivière sont unis par les liens du sang.

Les difficultés qui résulteraient du partage des Turcomans Saryk entre la Russie et l'Afghanistan seraient d'autant plus graves que les conditions politiques qui règlent la position de l'Afghanistan pourraient bien souvent servir d'obstacle à un réglement satisfaisant et prompt des contestations éventuelles sur la frontière des deux États. Ce sont ces considérations qui ont poussé le Cabinet Impérial à proposer au Gouvernement Britannique de prendre les conditions ethnographiques pour base du tracé de la frontière Afghane, et qui l'empêcheraient de donner son adhésion à tout projet qui s'écarterait de ce principe.

7. Le Gouvernement Britannique se voit dans l'impossibilité de donner son adhésion à un projet d'arrangement qui, en écartant une enquête préalable sur les lieux, tendrait à détacher de l'Afghanistan Pendjdé ou d'autres localités sur lesquelles les Afghans élèvent des prétensions. Il ne croit pas non plus pouvoir adhérer à la ligne-frontière proposée par le Gouvernement Impérial, et il serait tout au plus disposé à l'admettre comme limite méridionale d'une zone d'investigation dont la limite septentrionale serait formée par une autre ligne laquelle, partant de Shir-Tépé sur le Hériroud, rejoindrait Sary-Yazy sur le Murghab et longerait ensuite les confins des terres cultivées de Maïmené et d'Ankhoï pour aboutir à Kodjah-Saleh.

Le Cabinet Impérial ne peut s'empêcher de faire observer que cette zone est loin d'offrir les conditions d'impartialité voulue. En soustrayant à l'enquête des Commissaires respectifs tout le territoire compris entre la ligne proposée par le Cabinet Impérial et la frontière réelle de l'Afghanistan, qui a été décrite par le Colonel Macgregor, elle étend la compétence de la Commission à des contrées occupées aujourd'hui par des troupes Russes et où il n'existe pas la moindre trace de populations ou d'intérêt Afghans.

Toutes ces circonstances sont de nature à faire supposer que les négociations ayant pour objet une définition des limites de la zone d'investigation pourrait difficilement aboutir à un prompt résultat; qu'elle ne contribuerait probablement qu'à prolonger l'état d'incertitude qu'il est de l'intérêt des deux Gouvernements de faire cesser le plus tôt possible, et que la saison favorable aux investigations de la Commission pourrait en attendant être perdue.

Les inconvénients ci-dessus exposés ne pourraient être empêchés que si le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique consentait à adopter comme base des investigations la ligne-frontière proposée dans le Mémorandum du Cabinet Impérial du 16 Janvier dernier, dans quel cas ce dernier serait tout disposé à envoyer sans retard son Commissaire sur les lieux pour examiner conjointement avec le Général Sir Peter Lumsden les détails de la frontière à tracer.

(Translation.)

Observations upon the Memorandum inclosed in the Note addressed to M. de Staal by Lord Granville, dated March 1 (13), 1885.

IN his note of the 1st (13th) March last, Earl Granville transmitted to the Russian Ambassador in London a Memorandum in answer to the one which accompanied the despatch addressed to M. de Staal by the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the 16th January respecting the definition of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan.

The progress of the negotiations between the two Governments, as well as the considerations which have guided the attitude of the Russian Government upon this question, having been set forth in detail in the above-mentioned Memorandum of the 16th January, the Imperial Cabinet will confine themselves on the present occasion to

noticing only some of the observations contained in Earl Granville's communication, which might, in their opinion, give rise to misunderstandings.

1. The British Memorandum alludes amongst other things to the proposal which the Russian Ambassador in London was instructed to make to the Queen's Government in 1882 relative to the settlement of the Afghan frontier, from the point at which it had been left undefined up to Sarakhs. That proposal had been instigated by a previous proposal of the British Government, the object of which was the desirability of an understanding between the two Powers respecting their policy and their relative positions in Central Asia. Earl Granville having suggested to the Russian Ambassador amongst other things the necessity for an arrangement between England, Russia, and Persia respecting the definition of a frontier-line between the Persian possessions and Turcomania, from Baba Dormaz to the point at which the Persian frontier joins that of Afghanistan in the vicinity of the Heri-Rud, Prince Lobanow was instructed to reply to the London Cabinet—

1. That a delimitation of the frontier between our possessions and those of Persia was a question which could only exclusively concern that Power and Russia, and upon which we could not admit of any foreign interference; and

2. That if England wished nevertheless to contribute to the maintenance of peace in those districts which are principally liable to disturbances, the Imperial Cabinet would be quite ready to give her their assistance and to enter upon negotiations for a line of demarcation from Khodja-Saleh on the Amou Daria to the neighbourhood of Sarakhs. The territory to the east of the Heri-Rud not having been explored at that time, in consequence of the complete absence of security in those districts, the Imperial Cabinet thought it best to name Sarakhs as a spot the geographical position of which was quite well known, but at the same time they had asked Prince Lobanow to declare to the London Cabinet that the frontier-line to be traced should coincide with the boundary which separates the Afghan possessions from the territory of the Turkomans independent of Afghanistan, and the tribes of the Salors and the Saryks from the possessions of the Jemshidis and the Hezaris. Prince Lobanow was also instructed to notify to the Government of Her Majesty the Queen that the Imperial Cabinet have the same object in view in dealing with the Turkomans as England has in regard to the Afghan tribes bordering upon India and Beloochistan, that is to say, to establish upon a firm basis the security of their possessions, and a peaceful state of things along their frontier. The London Cabinet not having deemed it possible at that time to carry out the proposals of the Imperial Cabinet, the Russian Ambassador likewise found it impossible to make use of the instructions with which he had been furnished on the subject.

2. The involuntary delay which has taken place in the departure of General Zelenoy for Sarakhs may have been a subject of disappointment for Her Britannic Majesty's Government; but it was the invasion of Penjdeh by the Afghans, and not General Zelenoy's delay, which prevented the negotiations from following their natural course. Having taken care to warn the Government of Her Majesty the Queen in good time of the unfavourable consequences which such an invasion could not fail to bring with it, the Imperial Cabinet found themselves obliged to take steps to protect their rights, and it was with this object that they thought it right to ask that the arrangements previously agreed upon between the two Governments respecting the functions of the Commission should be completed by a preliminary definition of a zone within which the investigations should be conducted. Events have not been slow in justifying the apprehensions of the Imperial Cabinet with regard to the difficulties which would be experienced in arriving at a direct understanding between the respective Commissioners upon this subject. The British Government has thought it impossible to adopt the zone drafted under General Zelenoy's care, and the plan which they have now proposed in their Memorandum of the 1st (13th) March in more than one particular disagrees with the views of the Imperial Cabinet and with the results of the investigations executed by their order. The Imperial Cabinet thinks it quite superfluous to dwell upon the gravity of the difficulties which would have arisen if the Commission at the first outset had met with insurmountable obstacles.

3. Her Britannic Majesty's Government declares that the principle, according to which the state of the possessions of Shere Ali Khan in 1872-73 should have served as a basis for the present arrangement, has been abandoned as far as the north-west portion of the frontier is concerned, and on this point they refer to a passage in the despatch addressed by Prince Gortchacow to Count Brunnow, dated the 7th (19th) December, 1872. The Imperial Cabinet find it impossible to admit this interpretation. In giving their adhesion to the tracing of the above-mentioned part of the frontier

indicated in Earl Granville's despatch of the 17th October, 1872, which was not in accordance with the principle laid down above, the Imperial Cabinet had no intention of abandoning the principle itself, as may be seen from the passage in Prince Gortchacow's despatch, which follows the paragraph quoted by Earl Granville: "In deference to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, the Imperial Cabinet would be ready to adhere, as regards this part of the frontier, to the line indicated in Lord Granville's despatch."

Having regard to these circumstances, the Imperial Cabinet cannot now recognize the right of the Afghans to extend their sovereignty over territories which were not mentioned in the arrangement of 1872-73. Moreover, in their Memorandum of the 9th June, 1884, as well as in several of their subsequent communications, the Imperial Cabinet took care to point out to the English Ambassador that it was only on the basis of the principle established by the arrangement of 1872-73 that they could proceed to the delimitation of the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, and the Government of Her Majesty the Queen, on their part, raised no objection to this condition.

4. Without giving an official character to the observations contained in Colonel Macgregor's work on the subject of the north-west portion of the Afghan frontier, the Imperial Cabinet cannot, nevertheless, overlook the importance which is to be attached to information furnished by an eye-witness, and especially by a field officer of the British army, who was acquainted with the political questions connected with Central Asia, and whose object, as his work testifies, was to discover the best means of insuring British interests in Asia against the ambitious designs which he attributes to Russia. These circumstances are sufficient to remove every shadow of suspicion as regards the impartiality of the information mentioned above. The terms in which the passage in Colonel Macgregor's work is expressed, as quoted in the Imperial Cabinet's Memorandum of the 16th January last, are enough to show that the question is one of a frontier line, and not of an internal line of defence, as the British Government is led to believe.

5. The Penjdeh Oasis has never formed part of the Afghan Province of Badghis, and the Turkoman population of that locality has always enjoyed complete independence, as is proved, among other things, by the frequent raids committed by the Penjdeh Saryks, before the establishment of Russian authority at Merv, upon the territory of their neighbours and among others upon Khorassan, as well as the reprisals to which they had been subjected in their turn. The Russian traveller, M. Lessar, went all over Penjdeh in the spring of last year, and found no trace of Afghan domination there. And in this connection, the Imperial Cabinet does not think it superfluous to refer to the two Memoranda which were exchanged in the month of April 1884 between Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. With regard to the friendly negotiations between the two Governments, Sir E. Thornton had expressed a wish that orders should be sent to the authorities in the Trans-Caspian Province to prevent Russian Agents from visiting localities forming part of Afghan territory. Whilst declaring that he was ready to accede to this wish, the Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs thought it right to acquaint the English Ambassador, in a statement dated the 16th April, 1884, with the nature of the relations which had been established between the Turkomans of Penjdeh and the authorities of the Trans-Caspian Province, and with the dispatch of two Russian Agents with orders to visit Yulatan and, if necessary, Penjdeh. That communication did not elicit the slightest remark on the part of the British Government.

All the considerations set forth above tend to show that the invasion of Penjdeh by the Afghans, which was effected in the course of last summer, constitutes a proceeding incompatible with the principles of the arrangement of 1872–73, which were to serve also as a basis for an arrangement to fix definitively the north-western frontier of Afghanistan.

6. According to the English Memorandum of the 1st (13th) March, Asia affords more than one instance of the division of tribes by territorial frontiers, and the Government of Her Majesty the Queen see no reason why such a division should be considered as impracticable in the present case, or why it should occasion serious difficulties.

The Imperial Cabinet think it right to say, in answer, that frequent experience has shown them the disadvantages arising from such a state of things; that they constantly encountered such disadvantages as long as the Turkomans of Merv, being related to those of Akhal, were not subject to Russian authority, and that they still

encounter them on the Atrek, where the tribes who inhabit the two districts of the river are united by blood relationships.

The difficulties which would ensue from the partition of the Saryk Turkomans between Russia and Afghanistan would be all the more serious, because the political conditions which dominate the position of Afghanistan might often form an obstacle to a prompt and satisfactory solution of the disputes which may arise hereafter on the frontier of the two States. These considerations induced the Imperial Cabinet to propose to the British Government to take ethnographical divisions as a basis for tracing the Afghan frontier, and would prevent them from adhering to any plan which departed from that principle.

7. The British Government finds it impossible to give its adhesion to a proposal for an arrangement which, while avoiding a preliminary investigation on the spot, would tend to detach from Afghanistan Penjdeh or other places claimed by the Afghans. They are also unable to adhere to the line of frontier proposed by the Imperial Government, and the most they would be ready to do would be to accept it as the southern limit of a zone of investigation, the northern limit of which would be formed by a line from Shir-Tépé, on the Heri-Rud, to Sari-Yazi, on the Murghab; thence along the outskirts of the cultivated land of Maimeneh and Ankhoi, and so to Khodja-Saleh.

The Imperial Cabinet cannot refrain from pointing out that this zone is far from affording the conditions of impartiality required. Whilst withdrawing from the scope of the inquiries of the respective Commissioners all the territory comprised between the line proposed by the Imperial Cabinet and the real frontier of Afghanistan as described by Colonel Macgregor, it extends the jurisdiction of the Commission to districts which are now occupied by Russian troops, and where not the slightest trace of Afghan population or interests exists.

All these circumstances warrant the supposition that the negotiations for a definition of the limits of a zone of investigation could hardly come to a prompt conclusion; that they would probably only tend to prolong the state of uncertainty which it is the interest of the two Governments to put an end to as soon as possible, and that the best time of year for the investigations of the Commission might in the meantime be wasted.

The difficulties above referred to could only be prevented if Her Britannic Majesty's Government were to consent to adopt the frontier line proposed in the Imperial Cabinet's Memorandum of the 16th January last as the basis of the investigations, in which case the latter would be fully prepared to send their Commissioner to the spot without delay to examine, conjointly with General Sir Peter Lumsden, the details of the frontier to be traced.

No. 268.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April* 1, 1885, 4·50 P.M.

SIR P. LUMSDEN reports that on 22nd ultimo a Russian column 1,500 strong, under General Komaroff and Colonel Alikhanoff, advanced to Yurush Doshan, giving out their intention to take Ak-Tépé and Penjdeh. 100 Turkoman sowars advanced through Kizil-Tépé towards Pul-i-Khisti on 25th, but on being warned by Afghan picket they retired.

No. 269.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 30, 1885.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 27th instant, of which I gave M. de Giers a copy, I have now the honour to inclose copy of a paper which I have just received from his Excellency.

Your Lordship will perceive that his Excellency states that the Russian Government do not entertain, and have never entertained, projects of aggression against Herat, or any other part of the possessions of the Ameer.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 269.

Memorandum.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères a pris connaissance de la notice qui lui a été remise par M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre à la date du 16 courant et qui contient l'expression du vœu du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique de voir cesser l'excitation provoquée dans les deux pays à la suite des rumeurs concernant des préparatifs qui seraient poursuivis des deux côtés.

La même notice constate que, sauf des circonstances indépendantes de leur volonté et qui pourraient amener des changements subits, les deux Gouvernements se trouvent dans une position qui leur permet d'arriver à un arrangement satisfaisant et honorable pour la Russie, l'Émir de l'Afghanistan, et l'Angleterre.

Le Cabinet Impérial ne peut que s'associer au vœu ci-dessus exposé du Gouvernement Britannique. Il n'a jamais nourri et ne nourrit point de projets d'agression contre Hérat ou quelque autre partie des possessions de l'Émir, et il n'a pas d'autre but que de contribuer à l'établissement de la paix et de la sécurité dans ces contrées. Étant résolu de respecter scrupuleusement les droits de la Grande-Bretagne ainsi que ceux de l'Émir, le Cabinet Impérial se plaît à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine se montrera animé des mêmes égards pour les droits de la Russie, et il est convaincu que, dans ces conditions, les deux Gouvernements réussiront à écarter tout ce qui serait de nature à entraver une solution satisfaisante de la question qui fait l'objet de leurs négociations.

St. Pétersbourg, le 18 *Mars,* 1885.

(Translation.)

THE Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs has taken note of the Memorandum which was transmitted by the English Ambassador on the 16th instant, and which contains the expression of the wish of Her Majesty's Government that the agitation raised in the two countries by the rumours about the preparations said to be in progress on both sides should cease.

The same Memorandum states that, unless circumstances arise over which they have no control, and which might bring about sudden changes, the two Governments are in a position which would allow them to arrive at an arrangement satisfactory and honourable for Russia, the Ameer of Afghanistan, and England.

The Imperial Cabinet cannot do less than join in this desire of Her Majesty's Government. They have never cherished, nor do they cherish, aggressive views on Herat or any other part of the Ameer's possessions, and they only aim at contributing to the establishment of peace and security there. Resolved as they are to respect scrupulously the rights of Great Britain, as well as those of the Ameer, the Imperial Cabinet hope that Her Majesty's Government will display the same regard for the rights of Russia, and they are convinced that the two Governments will thus succeed in avoiding everything which might interfere with a satisfactory solution of the question now under negotiation.

St. Petersburgh, March 18, 1885.

No. 270.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 3, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador called and stated that he had received a despatch from M. de Giers recapitulating the message communicated by your Excellency, in accordance with the instructions contained in my telegram of the 27th ultimo, as to the desire of Her Majesty's Government to come to an early and friendly arrangement with Russia in regard to the Afghan Boundary question.

M. de Giers declared that these views corresponded exactly with those of the Emperor and of the Russian Government.

Russia had no intention either now, or at any time, of threatening Herat or any part of Afghanistan, and her desire was to establish between her possessions and those of the Ameer an efficient and lasting frontier which would secure the peace of those regions and strengthen her friendly relations with England.

The Russian Government believed that this result might be attained by negotiations between the two Governments, and they were quite ready to co-operate to that end.

There had never been any idea on the part of Russia of menace. The force hitherto maintained in those territories was no more than was absolutely necessary to keep order, and it had only been recently increased to the extent required for strictly defensive purposes.

The despatch concluded with the assurance that the Russian Government deplored as much as Her Majesty's Government the excitement produced by the rumours of armaments, whether true or false, and reciprocated the wish that it might be speedily allayed by an honourable and satisfactory arrangement.

M. de Staal expressed his earnest hope that the elements of such an arrangement would be found in the latest communication from his Government, and that no quarrel would take place about a question regarding which both countries had the same interest, and the same desire to come to an understanding.

I am, &c.,
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 271.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April 4, 1885.*

I SPOKE to-day to the Russian Ambassador after consultation with my colleagues. I informed M. de Staal that I could not conceal from him the disappointment with which the recent communications from his Government regarding the Afghan boundary question had been received.

In their reply of the 13th March Her Majesty's Government had endeavoured to make proposals affording reasonable grounds for hoping that an agreement might be arrived at.

They did not propose that which seemed to them abstractedly the best. In answer to this the Russian Government had replied by a despatch and Memorandum, couched in terms which were not discourteous, but of which the substance was to this effect: That the Russian Government objected to the proposals of Her Majesty's Government, and on the other hand offered no counter-proposal, but insisted upon the adoption of their own views in their entirety.

I stated that the Russian Government appeared virtually to exclude by disparagement their own zone, while by direct words they refused that of Her Majesty's Government.

There remained only the proposal for an inquiry upon a line prescribed by one of the parties, with the rejection *in limine* of that proposed by the other.

This appeared to proceed upon the principle that when the two Powers were about to undertake a joint inquiry, it appertained to one of them to dictate the terms.

It was impossible, I said, for the British Government to proceed on a basis which substantially denied the equal footing of the two Powers.

Her Majesty's Government could not believe that this was the last word of the Russian Government, which could only be met by a refusal. Such a result would be lamentable, and unworthy of the two countries; and they entertained the hope that the Russian Government had not communicated their final decision, but would consider some mode which would enable the two countries to carry on the inquiry on equal terms.

M. de Staal replied that, in his view, the Russian Government did not insist upon the immediate acceptance of the boundary-line proposed in the despatch of the 16th (28th) January; but that the question was that the line should be taken as the basis of investigation for the Commission, which would then meet without delay, retaining the power of discussing the different points of the line on the spot. When their examination was completed, the Commissioners would submit the result of their labours and of their discussions to their respective Governments.

I expressed my regret that the explanations which his Excellency had given did not remove the objections which I had stated to be felt by Her Majesty's Government.

But I said that I would repeat his observations to my colleagues; and I

subsequently informed M. de Staal that the Cabinet adhered to the observations which I had stated to his Excellency, and that they would be glad if he would communicate them to his Government, from whom Her Majesty's Government hoped to hear again.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 272.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 6.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April 2, 1885.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 30th ultimo, in which I transmitted copy of a Memorandum which I had received from M. de Giers relating to the contents of your Lordship's telegram of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that at an interview which I had yesterday with his Excellency he told me that he had submitted that Memorandum to the Emperor, and that it had met with His Majesty's entire approval.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 273.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 6, 3·50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April 6, 1885.*

DURING last week telegraphic communication with Meshed has been interrupted.

No. 274.

Earl Granville to Sir R. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April 6, 1885, 5·45 P.M.*

URGE that immediate steps may be taken to restore communications.

No. 275.

Sir R. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 7.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, April 7, 1885.*

I HAVE urged upon the authorities the importance of speedily repairing the telegraph line to Meshed. The repairs are being executed, but the line is in a bad state, and the weather unfavourable.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 2 (1885).

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CENTRAL ASIA.

(In continuation of "Central Asia No. 1: 1884.")

[The Maps alluded to in this Volume will appear in "Central Asia No. 3."]

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CENTRAL ASIA. No. 3 (1885).

MAPS

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MAP No. 1 is a chart of routes followed by Members of the Afghan Boundary Commission from Kuhsan to Bala Murghab, and was inclosed in Sir P. Lumsden's despatch of the 9th January, 1885.
(See "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 153, No. 198.)

MAP. No. 2 is a reproduction in English of a portion of the Russian Map referred to in Sir E. Thornton's despatch of the 11th March, 1885.
(See "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 173, No. 233.)
The broken lines on this Map were inserted to show the zone proposed by the Russian Government, the 14th (26th) November, for investigation by the Boundary Commission.
(See Sir E. Thornton's despatch of the 27th November, 1884, "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 105, No. 138.)
The continuous line indicates the line of frontier proposed by the Russian Government in M. de Giers' note of the 16th (28th) January, 1885.
(See "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 141, No. 182.)

MAP No. 3 was left at the Foreign Office by Prince Cantacuzène the 9th April, 1885, and is referred to in a despatch from Lord Granville to Sir E. Thornton of that date.
(See "Central Asia No. 4, 1885.")

MAP No. 4 was communicated by M. Lessar. It shows his explorations and a portion of the line of frontier proposed by Russia on the 16th (28th) January, 1885.

MAP No. 5 is a Sketch Map to illustrate the various zones and lines of frontier proposed by Russia and England.
(See Sir E. Thornton's despatch of the 27th November, 1884, "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 105.)
M. de Giers, the 16th (28th) January, 1885, "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 141.
To M. de Staal, the 13th March, 1885, "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 167.
M. de Giers' telegram, the 7th April, 1885, "Central Asia No. 5, 1885."

Sir E. Thornton, November 27, 1884. No. 138 of "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 105.
See Maps Nos. 2 and 5.

Sir P. Lumsden, January 9. No. 198 of "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 153.
See Map No. 1. Chart of routes followed by members of the Afghan Boundary Commission from Kushan to Bala Murghab.

M. de Giers, January 16 (28). No. 182 of "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 141.
See Map No. 5.

Sir E. Thornton, March 11. No. 233 of "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 173.
See Map No. 2. A reproduction in English of a portion of the Map referred to.
The lines have been inserted to show the zone proposed by Russia November 14 (26), 1884, and the line of frontier proposed by Russia January 16 (28), 1885.

To M. de Staal, March 13. No. 226 of "Central Asia No. 2, 1885," p. 167.
See Map No. 5.

M. de Giers' telegram, April 7. (See "Central Asia No. 4, 1885.")
See Map No. 5.

To Sir E. Thornton, April 9. (See "Central Asia No. 4, 1885.")
See Map No. 5.

CENTRAL ASIA. No. 3 (1885).

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SKETCH MAP OF M. LESSAR'S EXPLORATIONS

WITH FRONTIER PROPOSED BY RUSSIA MARKED BY HIM IN RED

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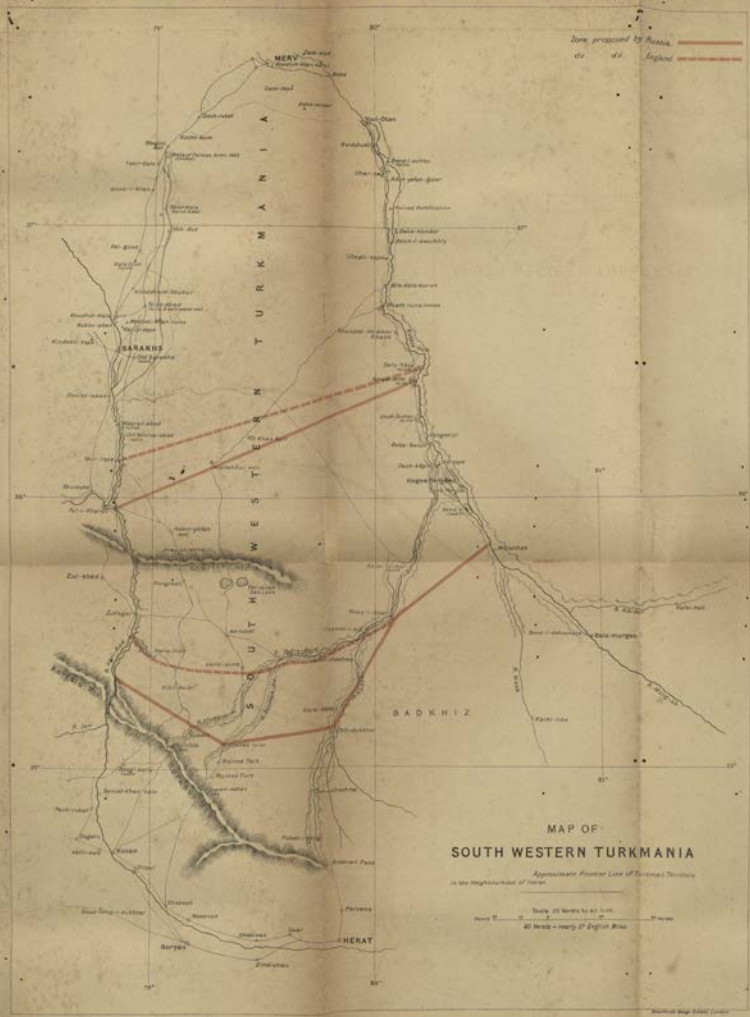
SARAKHS
BADKHIZ
HERAT
Gouryan
Sindookan
Kasan
Ghobeh
Reserve
Pervana
Shahrian
Shaki
Ruined Fort
Ruined Fort
Ruined Fort

MAP LEFT AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE AT 12.30. P.M. ON APRIL 9TH 1885. BY PRINCE CANTACUZÈNE.



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May 1885.

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Further Correspondence respecting Central Asia.

(In continuation of "Central Asia No. 2: 1885.")

No. 1.

The Earl of Kimberley to the Viceroy of India.

(Telegraphic.) *India Office, February* 7, 1885.

AFGHAN Boundary.

Russian note proposes following line: "Starting from Heri-Rud about 10 versts south of Zulfikar the line would run by Karez Elias and Karez Souma to the rivulet of Egri Gueuk, would follow the crest of the heights which border on the right bank of the rivulet to the ruins of Chemen-i-Bid, and thence the chain of hills on the right bank of the Kushk to Hauzi Khan, whence it would run to a point north of Maruchak, which would belong to Afghanistan. From that point the line would follow the crest of the heights which border on the north the Valley of Kaisor and on the west that of Sangalak, and leaving Andkhoi to the west would run to Khoja Saleh." Exclusion of Penjdeh from Afghanistan insisted on.

No. 2.

The Earl of Kimberley to the Viceroy of India.

(Telegraphic.) *India Office, March* 25, 1885.

YOUR Excellency should, in your approaching conference with the Ameer, use every effort to ascertain in the most distinct manner possible how far the Ameer is prepared to proceed in confidential relations with us, and in execution of the Agreement entered into with him in 1880. Nothing would be worse than that we should proceed on an equivocal and half-explained understanding with him.

It is also of vital importance that he should place himself unreservedly in our hands as regards the settlement of his frontier by negotiation. We shall act for him as we should act for ourselves if the frontier were our own, and we shall do our utmost to obtain recognition of all his just rights. On the other hand, it is manifestly not for his interest that obligations should be placed on him as regards maintenance of order on his frontier which he cannot adequately discharge, and it may also, in our opinion, be advisable to make certain concessions rather than fail to bring the matter to a peaceful conclusion. You should, therefore, endeavour to persuade him not to take an extreme view of his claims.

No. 3.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *April* 4, 1885.

TO-DAY I discussed the boundary question with the Ameer. He seemed indifferent to the retention of Penjdeh. He stated that he could not tell which side the Sariks would take. If they were faithful to Islam they would send their wives and children and possessions into Afghanistan. Unless they did so they could not be expected to fight for him. They were wealthy, but he could get no tribute from them.

He appeared to me to consider Maruchak as the defensible frontier of Afghanistan, though desirous of carrying his western frontier as far north as possible.

The only localities to the retention of which he attached vital importance were the Pass of Zulfikar, Gulran, and Maruchak.

No. 4.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, April 8.)

(Télégraphique.) *St. Pétersbourg, le 7 Avril,* 1885.

COMME la zone d'investigation dressée par le Général Zelenoi n'a pas été acceptée par Lord Granville, et que de notre côté nous ne saurions accepter la zone décrite dans le Mémorandum Anglais du 13 Mars, vous êtes autorisé à proposer au Cabinet de St. James une zone qui aurait pour limite :—

Au nord : une ligne qui partirait du point sur le Heri-Rud situé au sud de notre poste,* et se dirigerait vers Aimak-Djary sur le Mourghab ; et—

Au sud : une ligne qui partirait du point sur le Heri-Rud où cette rivière coupe le chemin de montagnes Kargalu-Barkhut, se dirigeant par Gulran vers Tchil-Dukhtar, descendrait ensuite le Kushk jusqu'à Kaimine-Bid, d'où elle irait rejoindre Merutchak, qui resterait en dehors de la zone.

Les limites de la zone à l'est du Mourghab pourraient être empruntées au projet Anglais du 13 Mars.

Les Commissaires pourront procéder sans retard aux recherches sur les lieux dans le cas où cette base serait adoptée.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, April 7,* 1885.

AS the zone of investigation drawn up by General Zelenoi has not been accepted by Lord Granville, and as, on our side, we could not accept the zone described in the English Memorandum of the 13th March, you are authorized to propose to the Cabinet of St. James' a zone which would be bounded :—

To the north : by a line starting from the point on the Heri-Rud situated to the south of our post, and running towards Aimak-Djary on the Murghab ; and

To the south : by a line starting from the point on the Heri-Rud where that river cuts the mountain road Kargalu-Barkhut, running by Gulran towards Tchil-Dukhtar, then descending the Kushk to Chemen-i-Bid, from whence it would run to Maruchak, which would remain outside the zone.

The limits of the zone to the east of the Murghab might be taken from the English proposal of the 13th March.

The Commissioners might proceed without delay to their inquiries on the spot in case this basis is adopted.

No. 5.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April 8,* 1885.

THE Counsellor of the Russian Embassy called at the Foreign Office to-day, and communicated, by direction of M. de Staal, who was unwell, a telegram from M. de Giers, dated yesterday, to the following effect :—

As the zone drawn up by General Zelenoi had not been accepted by Her Majesty's Government, and as the Russian Government on their side had been unable to accept the zone proposed in the English note of the 13th March, he was authorized to make a proposal for a fresh zone, of which the boundaries would be as follows :—

To the north, a line starting from a point on the Heri-Rud, situated to the south of the Russian post at Pul-i-Khatun, and running thence towards Aimak-Djarri, on the Murghab ; whilst the southern limit would be a line starting from the point on the Heri-Rud where that river traverses the chain of hills Kargalu-Barkhut, thence by Gulran towards Tchil-Dukhtar, following thence the Kushk River to Chemin-i-bid, whence it would run to Maruchak, which would remain outside the zone.

* See No. 5.

The limits of the zone east of the Murghab to be those laid down in the English note of the 13th March.

M. de Giers added that, in the event of this proposal being adopted as a basis, the Commissioners might commence work without delay.

Prince Cantacuzène stated that a further telegram of the same day had just arrived from M. de Giers, announcing the receipt of news of a serious conflict at Ak-Tépé between the Afghans and the Russian troops, but without details or explanations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 6.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, April* 9, 1885.

THE Councillor of the Russian Embassy called at the Foreign Office to-day, by direction of M. de Staal, and left the accompanying Map,* on which the proposed zone is traced in continuous lines; and the zone proposed by Her Majesty's Government is marked in continuous open lines thus — — —.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 7.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, April* 9, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon. He repeated the explanations which had already been given by Prince Cantacuzène respecting the western point of the line now proposed by the Russian Government as the northern limit of the investigations of the Boundary Commission.

No. 8.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 13.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, April,* 8, 1885.

I HAD the honour to receive your Lordship's telegram of the 4th instant† the next morning. It enabled me to conjecture to a certain extent the nature of the answer which M. de Staal had been instructed to give to your note of the 13th ultimo relating to the Afghan Boundary question. But in order to become better acquainted with its contents I called upon M. de Giers, and asked him whether, as your Lordship had already received the answer, he would not be good enough to let me have a copy of it. His Excellency hesitated a little, but at length sent for his despatch to M. de Staal, and read me some portions of it, saying that he could not give me a copy of it, because he did not know whether M. de Staal had sent your Lordship a copy, or had embodied its contents in a note; but he gave me a copy of the Memorandum which was inclosed in his Excellency's despatch to M. de Staal, and which you will have already received.

On being made acquainted with the contents of these documents I expressed my extreme surprise and disappointment that it should have been thought possible that such a proposal could be accepted by Her Majesty's Government, and making use of the arguments furnished me in your Lordship's telegram above mentioned, I endeavoured to make him feel how inequitable and partial it was, and how impossible it was that we could acquiesce in a basis for negotiation dictated to us entirely in accordance with the views of the other party.

I asked his Excellency on what ground the Russian Government claimed that the line proposed by them should be taken as a basis, whilst that which we considered to be the true one was entirely put out of the question.

* See "Central Asia No. 3 (1885)," Map No. 3.

† See "Central Asia No. 2 (1885)," p. 19.

M. de Giers replied that the Russian Government looked upon all the territory as far south as the Paropamisus range as now under the control of Russia, on the ground that it really belonged to the Turkoman tribes who had given their allegiance to the Russian authorities and had asked their protection, and that it had never belonged to, nor ever been under the control of Afghanistan. He would not admit my contention that it was debatable ground, although, as I said, there were many Russian maps which marked the boundary of Afghanistan by a line drawn from Sarakhs to Khodja Saleh, and that he himself had often spoken of it in that sense before the annexation of Merv. But his Excellency insisted that it was in consequence of that annexation, and of the Turkoman tribes having asked for the protection of Russia, that she was obliged to secure to them the territory which really belonged to them and not to Afghanistan.

No. 9.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *April* 13, 1885.

AMEER left morning 12th for Peshawur. He started for Cabul 12th March, reaching Peshawur 30th, and Rawul Pindi by morning train 31st. Troops lined road Peshawur and Rawul Pindi, and Ameer seemed much pleased with reception. After interchange of private visits between Ameer and myself and Duke of Connaught arrangements were made for discussion of the existing situation in Afghanistan, and during next ten days Ameer and I alternately visited one another for this purpose. He spoke throughout with much sense and directness, and I was favourably impressed with his ability and self-reliance.

During the first week after Ameer's arrival heavy rains prevented reviews and Durbars, but weather having cleared, troops were paraded on 6th and 7th. Sight was very fine, and Ameer was much interested and impressed. On evening 6th Ameer attended banquet. In returning thanks for toast of his health he paid a compliment to the British army, and hoped to see Afghanistan flourishing like India, with which its interests were bound up. On 8th, Ameer was received in public Durbar; Lieutenant-Governor Punjab and North-West Provinces, Commanders-in-chief India, Bombay, and Madras, Members of Council, seven Punjab Chiefs, and deputation from Nepaul and Hyderabad were present. After a short time, Ameer asked for permission to say a few words which might be heard by all. He then spoke as follows:—"I am deeply sensible of the kindness which I have received from his Excellency the Viceroy, and of the favour shown to me by Her Majesty the Queen Empress. In return for this kindness and favour I am ready, with my army and my people, to render any services which may be required of me or of the Afghan nation. As the British Government has declared that it will assist me in repelling any foreign enemies, so it is right and proper that Afghanistan should unite in the firmest manner, and stand side by side with the British Government." This public declaration was received with some surprise and applause.

Same evening I received news of Russian attack on Penjdeh, and communicated it to the Ameer, who showed less emotion than might have been expected. He declared his determination to resist to the utmost any invasion of Afghan territory. He has since held similar language, and, while most anxious to avoid war and arrive at an amicable settlement with Russia on boundary question, he asserts that his people will fight desperately in defence of their families and country. I have promised him aid in arms and ammunition, and possibly money, should war break out shortly between England and Russia. In the event of certain contingencies, the basis of a satisfactory understanding with regard to our future action was laid before his departure. Farewell visit was paid on 11th. Ameer's last request was that he might receive decoration from the Queen. Her Majesty having graciously consented, Ameer was invested with insignia of G.C.S.I. On morning of 12th he left Rawul Pindi, wearing decoration, and evidently much gratified.

No. 10.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.) *Foreign Office, April* 14, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador and M. de Lessar met Lord Kimberley and me at my house this morning by appointment.*

The conversation turned to the line of frontier. I observed that, although Her Majesty's Government could not accept the proposed Russian line, it might be possible to adopt some modified line which might be fairly acceptable to both parties.

In answer to inquiries from M. de Staal and M. de Lessar, Lord Kimberley explained that it was a *sine quâ non* that the Zulfikar Pass should be left in possession of Afghanistan. If this were taken as the point of departure on the Heri-Rud, the line might be prolonged to Kila Maur, on the Kushk River. In tracing the line between these points it would have to be determined to whom the salt lake was to belong, and he need hardly advert to the importance of not depriving the Afghans of their supplies of salt.

M. Lessar said that this salt lake was only used by the Saryk Turkomans; the Jamshidis bought their salt from the Turkomans, and the supply of salt to Herat came from elsewhere.

In reply to an observation made by Lord Kimberley that the Russian line was drawn, as he was informed, along the ridges of the hills instead of at their foot, M. Lessar affirmed that there were no considerable heights in the district, which was an open country, and easily accessible in every direction.

He also explained that the reason why the Russian line crossed over near Chemen-i-bid to the right bank of the Kushk was that the control of the water was indispensable to the cultivation of the Turkoman country. For the same reason the line had been drawn to a point on the Murghab just north of Maruchak, so as to leave to the Russians the dam-head, upon the maintenance of which depended the irrigation of the Penjdeh valley; and the selection of the line between the Heri-Rud and the Kushk had been governed to a considerable extent by regard to the existence of wells at certain spots.

Lord Kimberley remarked that if such a line as that to which he had referred were agreed upon as a basis, the particular details must be settled by the Commissioners; the general principle, however, upon which it should be drawn should be to leave the passes in the possession of the Afghans, and to secure to them a good strategical line.

If the Russians met us fairly in this respect, we should be ready to act on the principle which we had laid down from the first, that the Ameer should not retain territory the possession of which would impose on him obligations which he could not adequately discharge, and in so acting we should be able to go far to meet the views as to the Saryk Turkomans which the Russians had urged so strongly on ethnographical grounds.

Nothing was said directly, in the conversation in which M. Lessar took part, as to the mode of dealing with Penjdeh, but it was confidentially hinted, by Lord Kimberley to M. de Staal, that concession as to Penjdeh was not impossible if the rest of the line were settled according to our wishes.

It was understood that this conversation was of the same informal character as that of the previous day, and that the observations of Lord Kimberley and myself were the expression of our personal views in answer to the questions which had been put to us by M. de Staal.

No. 11.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(Communicated April 17.)

(Télégraphique.) *St. Pétersbourg, le* 4 (16) *Avril,* 1885.

ETES autorisé par l'Empereur à répondre aux ouvertures de Lord Granville et Lord Kimberley :—

1. Retrait de nos troupes de la ligne occupée par elles pouvant occasionner anarchie ne saurions y souscrire, mais, pour faciliter travaux de délimitation, pourrions

* For conversation of previous day, see "Central Asia No. 5 (1885)," p. 11, No. 32.

consentir au déplacement de nos avant postes lors de l'arrivée des Commissaires sur les lieux.

2. Ne verrions pas d'inconvénient à admettre échange de Pendjdé contre Zulfigar, dans quel cas la frontière partirait d'un point sur le Hériroud un peu au nord de Zulfigar, passerait au sud d'Ak-Robat et rejoindrait Yegri-gueuk près de Kohrisi-Soumé, d'où sa direction coïnciderait avec notre projet précédent.

3. A mesure de l'avancement des travaux de délimitation les parties respectives seront tenues d'établir des postes sur la frontière, et elles seront dorénavant responsables du maintien de l'ordre dans les territoires qui leur seront adjugés.

4. L'escorte des Commissaires serait réduite à 100 hommes au plus de chaque côté et aucune augmentation ne saurait être admise, sauf entente entre les Commissaires.

Abstention de l'occupation de Pendjdé est une preuve palpable de nos égards pour l'Angleterre et du désir d'éviter froissements.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, April* 4 (16), 1885.

YOU are authorized by the Emperor to reply to Lord Granville's and Lord Kimberley's overtures :—

1. As the retirement of our troops from the line occupied by them may occasion anarchy, we cannot agree to it; but in order to facilitate the works of delimitation, we could consent to the removal of our advanced posts when the Commissioners arrive on the spot.

2. We see no objection to allowing the exchange of Penjdeh for Zulfikar, in which case the frontier would start from a point on the Heri-Rud a little to the north of Zulfikar, would pass south of Ak-Robat, and meet the Egri-Gueuk near Karez-Souma, after which its direction would coincide with our previous proposal.

3. As the work of delimitation advances the respective parties shall be bound to establish posts on the frontier, and shall for the future be responsible for the maintenance of order in the territories which shall be adjudged to them.

4. The escort of the Commissioners to be reduced to 100 men, at most, on each side, and no increase to be allowed, except by agreement between the Commissioners.

Abstention from occupation of Penjdeh is a palpable proof of our regard for England and of the desire to avoid friction.

No. 12.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 20.)

(Telegraphic.) *April* 20, 1885.

AMEER left Peshawur 15th, and recrossed his own frontier 18th, thoroughly contented with his visit. He has throughout taken every opportunity, in public and in private, of assuring us of his confidence and of his earnest conviction that interests of his country demand a close alliance between England and Afghanistan.

No. 13.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 28.)

My Lord, *Camp, Gulran, March* 18, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, a copy of a Report by Captain Maitland, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster, Intelligence Branch, regarding the position of the wells between Ak Tapa in the Panjdeh Valley, Gumbazli, Kaiún-Kui-usi, and Adam Ulan, on the northern border of Badghis, and information regarding the grazing rights of this border.

I also inclose a Report by Captain Yate on the salt lakes of Yar-oilan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. S. LUMSDEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 13.

Captain Maitland to Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(Extract.) *Gulran, March* 5, 1885.

IN accordance with instructions accompanying indorsement at Bala Murghab, the 26th January, 1885, I have the honour to make the following Report:—

Circumstances which I need not detail prevented the first part of the programme, that is to say, the visit to Sari Yazi, from being carried out. I marched, however, to Urush Doshan, accompanied by Captain Yate, and gathered certain information, a part of which is embodied in this Report.

After spending one night at Urush Doshan we returned to Ak Tapa, and found Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Ridgeway and Captain De Laessoe in the act of starting for the place we had just left, and possibly for Sari Yazi. In view, however, of your instructions conveyed to me through Colonel Ridgeway, and of the uncertainty of his movements, I considered it best to think no more of the Sari Yazi part of the reconnaissance, but to proceed at once with the journey across the country lying between the Murghab and Tajand Rivers, with the object of discovering and laying down the position of the wells said to exist in that region, and of ascertaining as far as possible what might be the grazing rights and grazing limits of the Panjdeh Turkomans in the same tract.

We stayed one day at Ak Tapa at the earnest request of Gokh Sardar, our head guide, for it was snowing when we began to strike tents, and the camel-men had no shelter. This delay enabled us to see that all our preparations were complete, and to start off our superfluous baggage and spare horses to rejoin the Mission. For as it was absolutely necessary to carry water for several days' consumption, the party had to be reduced to the smallest possible limits. Nevertheless, including the native surveyor and his half-dozen Khalassis, the party amounted to twenty-nine men, with fourteen horses and ponies and six riding-camels. We were furnished with fifteen days' supplies by General Ghausuddin Khan, commanding at Ak Tapa, and the same officer also procured for us forty large "masacks" and forty-three camels to carry food and water. As nothing whatsoever is to be procured at this season in the steppe, the former included "bhusa" for animals, and a certain amount of fuel. Of water we had enough, with economy, for three nights' consumption. But this was including three pairs of "puckals" belonging to the Mission, and brought from Bala Murghab. They proved so leaky as to be practically useless. Our own baggage-camels, in spite of reductions, amounted to a considerable number, but with these were some carrying a few days' rations which we happened to have in hand, over and above the supplies furnished by Ghausuddin Khan. The Turkoman camel-men also had spare animals carrying their own food, water, and effects. Altogether, our train of camels reached the formidable total of eighty. They were attended by about thirty drivers.

I have been thus particular in enumerating the strength of the party and its transport, as the best method of forming an independent estimate of the practicability of a country is to know the number of people that have been across it, and the preparations necessary for the journey.

We finally started on the 14th February, taking the road to Sarakhs. This leads in a general westerly direction to Kaiún-Kui-usi, which is not far north of the latitude of Ak Tapa. From thence roads branch to Khum Guzar, for Old Sarakhs, and to Adam Ulan, whence roads again lead to Pul-i-Khatun and Kangruali. My intention was to proceed to Kaiún-Kui-usi, if not occupied by a Russian post, and from thence proceed to Adam Ulan, unless that should chance to be occupied. From Adam Ulan I should have to proceed according to circumstances; but, in any case, it was necessary to get eventually to Kangruali, there to join on to Captain Peacocke's work.

As the little information I had been able to pick up previous to reaching Ak Tapa led me to suppose that there was, or had been, a route from the Tajand at or above Pul-i-Khatun to Maruchak, I was anxious that it should be explored by Captain Yate. But the people at Ak Tapa were unanimous in declaring that there was no water on that line for a distance of five marches, so the idea had to be abandoned, and we proceeded altogether.

Our first halt was at a spot known as Khálim-ung-Korogi, 16 miles from Ak Tapa. Here are two ancient wells, one of which was cleared out some twenty or more years ago by one Khálim, a Sarik Turkoman of Panjdeh. "Korogi" signifies "sunk" or "dug out," and "ung" appears to be the possessive suffix. It is frequently met with in names of places. A description of the country is postponed

until this brief record of our proceedings is finished. It is sufficient to state that it is a sandy, undulating, and broken waste, almost entirely covered with grass in spring and early summer, but with little other vegetation except the "kundum" bush, which grows pretty thickly in the western portions. The soil, without being actual sand, is soft enough to be heavy travelling anywhere off a beaten track. There was no water in the well.

From Khálim-ung-Korogi we marched 17½ miles, and halted at a spot without name or water. On this march we passed, at 12½ miles, the "kalifa" halting-place half-way between Khálim-ung-Korogi and Gumbazli, which people travelling with camels usually make the third stage. There is no water.

The third day, 16th February, we made a march of 18 miles, and halted at Kirish, the second of the two places of that name, and distinguished by the appellation of Bashaji, meaning five wells. As a matter of fact there are nine, though only one of them contained any water to speak of.

This march was an interesting one. At 4½ miles from our halting-place we passed a mound, evidently the site of an old fort. A few bricks were lying about, and the neighbourhood, to my mind, bore traces of cultivation. No name is given to this place, and no wells have been discovered, but it is more than probable they exist and might be found if a diligent search were made. A mile and three-quarters further is Tátung Ori, or Or Muhammad Amin. "Or" is Turki for a ditch or intrenchment; "Tátung Ori" is the intrenchment of the Tátar; at least that was the explanation offered by our guides. The Tátar alluded to is Muhammad Amin, Khan of Khiva, who made a great foray to Panjdeh and the Oxus some thirty years ago. I was not aware the Khans of Khiva were of Tátar extraction, nor had I ever heard of Muhammad Amin's expedition, and my books of reference had been sent back with the spare baggage. (I now see it is stated in the "Turkestan Gazette" that the family of the Khans of Khiva are descended from Chengis Khan.) Some record, however, of Muhammad Amin's rather remarkable journey is probably extant.

Curiously enough, one of the guides (Anak Sardar, who goes generally by the name of "Pelwan") was actually with Muhammad Amin's force. He states that it consisted of 10,000 horsemen and the same number of others, principally camel-drivers. Every two horsemen were provided with a camel-load of water and a camel-load of grain, so there must have been at least 10,000 camels. They took no "bhusa," the horses living on their grain ration and what they could pick up. As the time of year was the present (almost to a day according to Anak Sardar), there could have been only the smallest amount of grass just springing up, and the "tirkha" scrub is also dry and withered. On the other hand, patches of snow, as now, removed all anxiety on the score of water. The expedition was five days in moving from the neighbourhood of Sarakhs to the spot with which Muhammad Amin Khan's name is now associated, and five days more in Tash Kukru (Pul-i-Khisti), near which is an intrenchment similar to that of Tátung Ori. It is said to have been the custom of the Khivans, like the Romans, to fortify their camp or bivouac every night. The slowness of the march was intentional, as it was the Khan's object to sweep off the flocks of the Takas, who at that time occupied the Sarakhs district, and had permanent camps at Gumbazli and the two places called Kirish. The Sariks had not then been dispossessed of Merv, and were nominally subjects of Khiva. About 100 of them served with the expedition, which was principally composed of Khivan Turkomans. There were also a considerable number of Jamshidis, it being the time when that tribe were refugees at Khiva.

Tátung Ori is as nearly as possible 40 miles by road from Ak Tapa. About 3 miles beyond it is Gumbazli, now known as Gumbazli Sarik, to distinguish it from another Gumbazli, north of Kaiún-Kui-usi, which is called Gumbazli Taka. It is situated in a rather deep irregular hollow, and received its name from the existence of a "gumbaz," or domed tomb, which formerly existed, but which is now a mere heap of bricks. The tomb could only have been a small building. Various mounds about that on which stood the "gumbaz"—particularly one which apparently supported a small fort—show that this was once a place containing a good many permanent buildings, and possibly no inconsiderable population. It seems probable that the old caravan routes to Sarakhs and Meshed branched here, and Gumbazli, or whatever it was then called, might have been a depôt of some little importance. We found no less than ten wells, and undoubted traces of cultivation in the hollows, though there could hardly have been more than a few gardens and melon fields. All the wells are now more or less filled up, and it is said that none have yielded water since the Sariks were established at Panjdeh. Previous to that, however, when the Takas occupied this country, the wells gave abundant water, and the supply is believed to have been

well nigh inexhaustible, which any one having seen the wells at Kaiún-Kui-usi can very well believe. The Yuletan salt road, leaving the Murghab at Igri-ápi just above Hazrat Imam, and leading to the Yar-oilan salt lakes (Eryulan of old map), crosses the road by which we travelled at this point. There is no water on it. It will be further alluded to with other roads in this region.

After leaving Gumbazli, about 4 miles through a country which differs from that hitherto traversed in being pretty thickly grown with "kundum" and other bushes, brings one to the first Kirish. There are six wells resembling those of Gumbazli. They are all dry now, though one of them yielded water but a short time ago.

Another 4½ miles being traversed, the second Kirish is reached. As before stated, it is called Bashaji, that is, five wells, but we found nine in a hollow, the sides of which are well grown with brushwood, as are the surrounding sandy heights. One well had about 6 feet of water in it, the first we had found since leaving Ak Tapa.

On reaching this place we found horse-tracks about four days old. Gokh Sardar thought they were Afghan, but to me, who had never seen the marks of a Cossack horse, it seemed more probable they were those of a patrol from a Russian post at Kaiún-Kui-usi. From what the Turkomans told me at Ak Tapa, I expected to have found the Sarik flocks grazing in this neighbourhood, and to have got from the shepherds such information as I required. But, except one flock, seen the second day out, and passed at a distance, we had met with no sheep, and were still as ignorant of the state of affairs in this part of the country as before leaving Ak Tapa. At this juncture a camel-man came forward, and volunteered the statement that he had been at Kaiún-Kui-usi, only fifteen days ago, "shikaring." He had then seen a Russian post of eight Cossacks and two Sarik Turkomans, of Yuletan, on the high ground crossed by the Sarakhs road, some 2 or 3 miles from the wells. Thereupon he left, and did not go near them again, but he noticed that the Russians had put up a mark, which he described as a post, close to the road.

I thereupon determined to halt next day and send on one of the guides to Kaiún-Kui-usi to see if the Russians were still there or not. In reality I had little expectation of finding the place unoccupied. In the morning the Khorásali Sariks of Pandjeh made their appearance. They had been sent by Yalantush Khan to look round the wells and see if there were any Russian posts east of Pul-i-Khatun. I desired them to go on to Adam Ulan, and bring me word of any Cossacks they might see or hear of in that neighbourhood. They accordingly went off, and soon afterwards our guide returned from Kaiún-Kui-usi, with the report that there were no Russians and no recent hoof-marks, only a great number of camel-tracks going northward along the Taka salt road.

Next day, therefore, saw us at Kaiún-Kui-usi. The distance is 15 miles, but the road is by no means straight. It winds about a good deal to avoid sandy and broken ground. There was a violent wind all day, which the Turkomans said was a sign the winter was over. Plenty of rain may be expected, but no more snow.

Kaiún-Kui-usi is situated on the northern side of a sandy elevation which rises to a height of 600 feet above the general level of the country. There are other hills of similar nature, some of which will be hereafter noticed, but this one, standing in a comparatively level tract, is observable at a considerable distance. We first saw it towards the end of our second march. There are five wells at this place. Three now contain water, which is of good quality, and the supply is inexhaustible. The name signifies "wells of the sheep."

Several roads meet at Kaiún-Kui-usi. The route from Panjdeh to Sarakhs, which is that along which we have been travelling, is here crossed by the road from Merv to the salt lakes of Yar-oilan. This is the route used by the Taka salt caravans. The road taken by the "alamáns" of Yuletan also comes in here. After watering at the wells, the raiders followed the salt road over the hill, and on entering the plain beyond, took what line seemed best suited to their objects, but the most common course was to Kangruali, and thence to Ak Rabat and Gulrán.

We halted at Kaiún-Kui-usi on the 19th, as Hira Singh, the native surveyor, had plenty of work. I rode out this day to Gumbazli Taka, going first to the place where our Shikari camel-men stated the Russians had erected a mark. An hour's ride along the Sarakhs road failed to reveal anything of the kind described; nor could I discover any signs of the camping-ground of a party. This would seem to throw discredit on the whole story; but at the same time, it is difficult to see what object the man could have had in inventing so circumstantial a tale.

Gumbazli Taka is about 7 miles north of Kaiún-Kui-usi. From the last-named place the Taka salt road winds over an undulating and very broken country for

some 6 miles, when it passes between low hills. Beyond them, and about 100 yards left of the track, is an old well in a small hollow. It is now dry, being partly filled up, but gave water not many years ago, and a road from Sarakhs to Panjdeh ran past it. No trace of a "gumbaz" was discoverable. A few bricks only were scattered about as usual. It seems this place derives its distinctive appellation from being on the Taka salt road; while Gumbazli Sarik is so called because the Sarik "karáirals" (patrols) were accustomed to visit it regularly.

It began to rain in the afternoon, rained all night, and continued next day, the 20th, we therefore remained halted that day also.

The Khorásali Sariks came in from Adam Ulan and reported no Russians and plenty of water. As my instructions necessitated my going to Adam Ulan if possible, it now appeared advisable to divide the party, since the Taka salt road and the country to its west were well worth examining. It was therefore settled that Captain Yate should take that line. He was to follow the salt road to the "Nimaksar" at the Yar-oilan salt lakes. There are two of these, their basins divided by a ridge. The western lake is the Taka Nimaksar, the eastern that of the Sariks. He would reach there in two or three marches. There is no water on the road, nor any fit to drink nearer than Ak Rabat, a march further on. Provided with "masacks" sufficient to carry five days' supplies for his party, he would fill up these at Ak Rabat, and thence start along the Panjdeh salt road. This is also entirely waterless, but it was hoped he might be able to reach a place called Yardáram, where it was understood the road crossed the line of hills or high grassy downs which appears to extend across the space between the Murghab and the Tajand, and to be the natural northern boundary of Bághist. The submission of the Panjdeh Sariks to the Ameer of Afghanistan appears to deprive this feature of the political importance it might otherwise possess; nevertheless it is too important to be neglected, and as far as I could see, no other opportunity would occur of laying it down on our maps. Having gone as far along the Panjdeh road as possible, Captain Yate would return to Ak Rabat, and it was arranged we should meet there if possible about the 2nd or 3rd March. On the 21st we both started, going our several ways, Captain Yate towards Hibir, myself to Adam Ulan.

The routes to these places divide on the hill. After reaching the plain beyond, that to the former runs nearly south; the other, following an old "alamán" track, bears away to the south-south-west. At about the tenth mile, when near the low hills which form the southern border of the plain, the track was quitted, and turning to the right (west-south-west) we skirted the low hills for some miles, rising gradually, and crossing several tracks leading into them, most of which go to Agár-i-Chashma. These paths are made by Takas coming to collect pistachios, which grow on the hills about Agár-i-Chashma. In fact, that spot is also known as Agár-i-pista. There is also the deeply worn, but now quite disused, old salt road of the Takas, used by them when they were established at Sarakhs.

At about 16 miles we descended a steep slope at the head of the Adam Ulan basin, and reached that spot at 19 miles. Here are two brick-lined wells with plenty of water, which is also near the surface over a considerable extent of ground. After the recent rain and snow it was almost marshy. There are various mounds, particularly that of an old fort, 70 or 80 yards square, but not high. They are all covered with fragments of brick and pottery, among which may be found some bits of glass. There would seem to have been a good deal of cultivation here at one time. I guessed the cultivation area at about 1,000 acres. It appears to be rich land, not too wet, but capable of growing good crops without irrigation.*

The next stage was Garamáb, above Pul-i-Khatun, 16 miles, thus completing the journey from the Murghab to the Tajand in six marches. Total distance, 101½ miles. On reaching Garamáb I found the nearest Afghan post was at Khwája Isá-muddin,† a long way further up, while there were fifty Cossacks under an officer at Pul-i-Khatun. Some of these Cossacks passed our camp next morning as we were preparing to depart. They were going to their "bhusa" stores near the mouth of the second Garamáb defile. More than one party passed, but beyond asking my men the natural questions as to who we were and where we had come from, they took no notice of us.

* Adam Ulan.—"Ulan" is a word equivalent to "kushta," and the name, therefore, signifies the "death-place of Adam." This was considered by our guides the correct etymology; but they admitted it might be "ulang," which means a place where is luxuriant grass, and that would seem the most probable origin of the name.

† Saham-ud-din of Captain Barrow's sketch. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart informs me the correct name is Hisám-ud-din.

Hira Singh was able to do good work about Garamáb, but discovered that in crossing the spot without proper points from which to plane-table, he had got a good deal out. It is unnecessary here to say anything about Garamáb or the Tajand Valley. Her Majesty's Commissioner has seen the place himself, and the route along the river has been reported on by Captain Barrow, as well as previously by Mr. Condie Stephen.*

Having done and seen all that was necessary, we returned on the 22nd to Adam Ulan.

On the 23rd we moved to Agár-i-Chashma, and on the 24th to Kangruali, the total distance to which place is only 15 or 16 miles. These short marches were for the benefit of the surveyor, who was in difficulties. The country is one of small valleys (already beautifully green), divided by spurs running down from the high ground immediately north of Kangruali. Pistachio trees grow pretty thickly on the slopes in some places. Agár-i-Chashma is a very small spring. We cleared it out, but even then the supply was not sufficient for our small party, and the camels drank at a rain-pool near by. But as rock crops out of the hills in all directions, and the soft porous soil which absorbs the moisture so completely is of slight depth, water could most certainly be obtained in many of the ravines and valleys by a little digging.

At Kangruali we were obliged to remain three days for survey purposes. Owing to clouds hanging over the ranges on the day of our arrival that afternoon was completely lost, but the succeeding days were clear, and Hira Singh not only got good fixings from triangulated points, but plane-tabled a good deal of the strange and puzzling country, both east and west. In the former direction, he went up to the Taka salt road travelled by Captain Yate a few days previously. I went myself to the salt lakes on the 27th. The distance from Kangruali to the shore of the western lake is about 12 miles. Its basin, which has a diameter, from east to west, of about 10 miles, is divided from the still larger basin of the eastern lake by a low ridge, along which comes the Taka salt road. Captain Yate's interesting Report contains a description of the Yar-oilan lakes, and of the salt beds and salt traffic, which tallies almost exactly with what I heard on the same subjects. I need only remark that my aneroid gave the difference of elevation between the western edge of the basin and the shores of the lake as about 1,200 feet, whereas I think Captain Yate made it much less.

At Kangruali there are three wells, and the remains of a small "rabát," of burnt brick. As Captain Peacocke had informed me, all the wells were dry, but by clearing away some of the rubbish at the bottom of one of them we got water. The supply, however, had to be supplemented by rain-water from a small pool some 4 or 5 miles to the westward.

On the 1st instant we travelled to the Zulfikár Pass, halting at about 5 miles from the river; distance from Kangruali, 17 to 19 miles, according to the route taken during the first part of the march. The camels covered fully the last-named distance, but they choose to stick to beaten tracks. A good line, saving a mile or two, might well have been taken.

The undulating grassy plain south-west of Kangruali may be said to terminate in a descent to small valleys, which meet at the entrance to the first defile. Before reaching the latter the road passes south of a small conical hill, which is something of a landmark in this country of undulations, hollows, and plateaux. It is noticeable as being of trap, which I believe is rather rare in this region. Crossing the valley and the great "alamán" road of the Taka Turkomans, which runs in it, the road enters a cleft in the first sandstone range. This ridge presents a bold, scarped face to the west, but slopes gently to the east, from which side we approached it. The defile is somewha winding, and its cliffs rise rapidly from a few feet to 500 or 600. It is about 2 miles long, and perfectly practicable for artillery. Emerging from it, the road enters a broken tract between the sandstone ranges, and crosses it to the entrance of the second defile, which is about 3½ miles from the first. It is of the same character as the latter, about half-a-mile longer, and its rocky walls rise more quickly, and apparently to a greater height, than those of the first gorge. The general direction of both the clefts is from east to west, at right angles to the strike of the ranges. The second winds like the first, and at about half-way makes an abrupt turn to the right (north), in which direction it continues for half-a-mile before turning again to the left (west). At this corner it is joined by another gorge coming from the north-east, through which there is no road. The second gorge is as practicable for artillery as the first. In one place huge blocks have fallen from above, and partly close the passage;

* Until the moment of completing this Report I was quite unaware that a good deal of the country immediately east of the river above Pul-i-Khatun had been visited last September (1884) by Colonel Stewart.

but there is room for a gun to pass. In both defiles the greatest difficulty would appear to be the softness of the ground, which, at the time I passed through, was actually marshy in places, but in a month or two will probably be much drier. In any case the road could be easily improved for heavy traffic by cutting and laying down the brushwood which grows abundantly in both gorges. Some clearance of jungle would in any case be necessary to allow guns to pass.

The Zulfikár defiles do not appear to be of very great importance from a military point of view. The route through them would seem to be chiefly noteworthy as affording a means of communication between a force advancing up the Heri-Rud and a flanking column moving on the parallel line through Adam Ulan, Kangruali, and Ak Rabat to Gulran. Unless the water supply at Kangruali is capable of considerable development, it is not likely the latter would be used by any body larger than a Russian infantry brigade* or cavalry division.†

We found the Afghans had collected an outpost of considerable strength at Zulfikár: these were fifty cavalry, forty Khassadars, and an uncertain number of Jamshidi horsemen, the latter under Nasirulla Khan, a nephew of Yalantush Khan. Confronting these, at about a mile distance, were some half-dozen Taka Turkomans in Russian employ. They belonged to the post at Ak Rabat, which is commanded by a Russian Lieutenant, with whom Captain Yate appears to have entered into cordial relations during his visit to that place. The Russians keep up a constant interchange of communication by means of patrols between their posts at Pul-i-Khatun, Zulfikár, and Ak Rabat.

The same evening I arrived at Zulfikár a sowar came in from Captain Yate, to whom I had previously written from Kangruali, sending the letter to Ak Rabat, and asking him to join me at Kizil Bulák. Captain Yate's letter crossed mine on the road. He seemed to have made a very successful journey, but had unfortunately run out of provisions, and therefore intended to go at once to the head-quarters camp at Gulran.

We made a halt on the 2nd to allow the surveyor to carefully plane-table the difficult and interesting country we were in. I was glad of the opportunity to examine the defile at leisure. I did not cross the ford at Zulfikár, but was informed by the Afghans that it was not more than 2 or 2½ feet deep. The river seemed to have gone down since we had last seen it at Garamáb. At Zulfikár it is said to be always passable except for a few days, or at most a week, at a time, between this and May, when the melting of the snows about its distant sources may send down at once a considerable volume of water.

On the 3rd we retraced our steps to the entrance of the first defile, and then to the right (southward) down the well-marked "alamán" route of the Takas. This took us over a nearly dead level plateau for about 2 miles, after which there was an easy ascent for a mile and a half to a watershed, followed by a still more gentle descent which continued with greater or less regularity to our camping-ground, opposite the gap or gorge by which the road goes out to Kárez Eliás, that place being but a few miles to the west of us, on the further side of hills, gently sloping on this side, but presenting, as usual, a scarped face to the west. A somewhat similar but more broken range bounded the valley in which we were to the east, the scarped face being, in this case, towards us.

I was much struck on this day with the beautiful verdure of the country through which we passed. Since leaving Adam Ulan, the hills and valleys had been visibly putting on their spring garb, and about Agár-i-Chashma there were some really delightful bits of scenery. Still, to-day, there was an approach to richness in the green of the lower-lying land which was very pleasing.

The next day we made a short march to Kizil Bulák, about 10 miles. At about 1¾ miles we passed Ao Charmi, where there are two little wells brimful of water in a ravine to the right of the road. The overflow is collected in small ponds, but the supply is not very abundant. Here I met a note from Captain Yate, who had gone after all to Kizil Bulák, but not hearing anything of me on the 3rd, had left this morning for Gulran.

The road lay up the valley the whole way. Kizil Bulák is a ravine or hollow somewhat resembling that of Ao Charmi. A few hundred yards up it, is a spring the water of which is run into ponds, and is sufficient for a considerable force.

Clouds had been gathering for several days, and the night we were at Kizil Bulák there was a very tolerable fall of snow. It was still snowing a little when we started.

* Eight battalions. † Eighteen squadrons.

At about 5 miles the head of the valley is reached. From thence the road lies over a plateau fully 600 feet higher than Kangruali, and 250 to 300 feet higher than Gulran.*

Here the snow was some 6 inches deep, balling in the horses' feet and compelling a slow rate of progress. A thick mist also hid everything from us more than a few yards distant. After we had descended to the lower ground, however, the snow was much less, and about midday it suddenly vanished as the clouds broke and the sun tried to struggle out for a few moments.

At about 12¾ miles we quitted the well-marked track we had been following, and which appears to lead to the Khumbao Pass. Turning to the left we followed an indistinct path across a plain, and at about 14 miles struck a very winding stream of salt water, the general direction of which was thenceforward followed to Gulran, at which place we arrived at about 1·30. The distance seemed to me to be only 20 miles, but as we often rode fast it is probably more.

It is now necessary to give a more complete description of the country through which we passed; including the wells and watering-places found in it, and the routes by which it is traversed.

The hitherto little-known tract lying between the Murghab River, with its affluent the Kushk-Rud on the east and the Heri-Rud, or Tajand, on the west, has a breadth of about 90 miles between Ak Tapa and Pul-i-Khatun, which are in nearly the same latitude. It may be generally described as a great expanse of undulating and broken ground, rising into gently-sloping heights and high plateaux to the south, and subsiding into nearly level plains to the north-west.

The term "chol" is applied to the greater portion of it by the Turkomans. This is an Arabic word signifying a desert, and is commonly used in Afghanistan and Baluchistan as synonymous, or nearly so, with "registan."

The "chol" of the Turkomans is not, however, by any means a sand desert, for which they have another word, "chágáh." Its soil is very light and sandy, such as is termed in the Usbak dialect "khum," a word which has hitherto been translated by European travellers as sand. For instance, we have always understood that the Kizil Khum and the Kara Khum meant, respectively, the red-sand desert and the black-sand desert. It would now seem probable that these tracts are not sand deserts, but resemble the Turkoman "chol." The Sarik word for the light sandy soil of the latter is not "khum," but "kirach."

There are, it would seem, real sands ("chágáh") between the "chol" and the Merv Oasis, but nothing of the sort was met with in the country between Ak Tapa and Garamáb. The term "chol" is applied to the tracts east of the Murghab as well as to those on the west, and, in fact, to all country of a similar description.

The border of the "chol" towards Panjdeh, where we entered it, is so sandy as to be little removed from actual sand; but after a mile or two the soil becomes firmer, and does not alter much until the Tajand is approached. The country is a mass, it might almost be said a labyrinth, of low ridges, hillocks, undulations, and hollows, without the faintest trace of a drainage-channel anywhere. In this it resembles a real sand desert, and the light porous soil absorbs all the rain and snow which falls on it as quickly as if it were actual sand.

Various distinctly-marked and well-known routes lead through the "chol" both from east to west and from north to south. Although the country appears so open at first glance, these tracks are by no means straight. On the contrary, they wind surprisingly to avoid patches of sandy broken ground, which are of frequent occurrence. The whole of the ground is sufficiently soft to cause travellers, whether on foot or horseback, to prefer a beaten track wherever such is available, but a much more serious obstacle to moving off the road is the enormous number of holes made by sand-rats, marmots, and foxes, which literally honeycomb the ground, so that it is frequently impossible for a horse to go even a few yards from the path without putting his foot into one of them. To ride straight over the country at any rate of speed is more troublesome and fatiguing than to keep to the more circuitous but harder tracks, and to gallop is almost dangerous. For this reason even the "alamáns" of the Sariks and Takas kept as much as possible to the regular paths. These are not numerous in the eastern half of the country, but as the Tajand is neared they become more frequent, until about Kaiún-Kui-usi, Adam Ulan, Kangruali, &c., tracks may be found leading in almost every direction. Many of them, however, are already getting very old and faint.

The light soil of the "chol" is by no means wanting in fertility of a kind. It is not

* But barometric observations here and throughout the journey are untrustworthy.

strong enough to bear crops, which would at once be parched up by the sun when the spring rains were at an end. But short grass appears to grow on it almost everywhere. When we passed through the country the grass was but just springing; however, there is sheep-grazing of one kind or another right through the winter. The grass in the "chol" itself soon withers after the dry season has set in, but the "tirkha" (wild thyme, or southernwood) lasts much longer. In parts there is a good deal of what may be termed thin jungle of "kundum" and other bushes, among which the "barjak," resembling broom, is conspicuous. We saw very few bushes of any sort until the neighbourhood of Gumbazli Sarik was reached. About here the country changed its aspect to some extent. Considerable tracts from Gumbazli westward are pretty thickly covered with bushes, "kundum" being always the most common, while low "tirkha" scrub is very general. On the other hand, there seems to be less grass, and, as usual, where the latter is best, not a bush, however small, can be seen. Generally it may be taken for granted that the sandier the soil the more bushes and less grass will be found growing on it. This applies to the "chol" generally. There are some tracts near the Murghab where there is a good deal of wood in the shape of "kundum," &c. The assafœtida plant, called by the Turkomans "purs kamak," is abundant in many places, growing most thickly in the sounder grassy ground. The people of the country seem unaware of its value.

Not unfrequently the country rises into elevations which may be dignified by the name of hills. That is to say, they rise from 400 to 700 feet above the general level of the "chol;" their slopes are invariably very gentle, and their summits nearly flat. Some of these elevations are well known by name, probably the shepherds have names for all of them. Among those we saw are the following:—Birwat Guzlán, about 12 miles west of the Murghab, and north of our road. It is from this hill, or hills, for there is said to be a group of three, that the people of Panjdeh obtain their supply of wood. Gok Chelar, or Goyok Chelar, a ridge 24 to 30 miles from the Murghab, and not far from our route. Khan Kiri, "the Khan's hill," the Khan being a leader of shepherds, so styled. Kaik Kiri, "deer hill," part of the same ridge as Khan Kiri. The hill of Kaiún-Kui-usi, which is a fairly good landmark 600 feet high. North-west of it are hills known as Kárau-ung-Kiri, "the hills of the black-visaged one." the road to Sarakhs passes by these hills. North-west of Kaiún-Kui-usi is a hill called Taogar, a word said to signify a peak. There is an old well near its foot, and it is a good land-mark. There are other small hills to the north and north-east of those mentioned, but looking from the top of the hill near Gumbazli Taka, the country to the north and west appears to be an almost an open plain, with no hills except a line of low heights in the neighbourhood of the river; but there is doubtless a good deal of broken ground not distinguishable at a distance.

A long ridge runs south of the road by which we travelled, and parallel to it. It commences near the river, where it is known as the Baganj Kiri, and extends westward to the neighbourhood of Tatung Ori. The slopes of this range; if it can be so called, are extremely gentle. It throws out ill-defined projections or spurs to the northward, which are crossed by the road. One of the last of these, 33 miles from Ak Tapa, was the highest point on the route between the Murghab and the Tajand, and from it a view is obtained of the hills in the neighbourhood of Pul-i-Khatun, including those on the Persian side of the river. Its elevation is about 900 feet above our camp at Ak Tapa, and therefore about 1,450 feet above sea-level.

To the south of this ridge is open country extending some half-dozen miles or more to the spurs and lower slopes of another and much more important ridge or line of heights, which stretches almost all across the space between the rivers, and may be considered, topographically, as a continuation of the Kara Dagh mountains, which extend to Pul-i-Khatun. In old maps a range of hills is depicted running eastward from that place. In most of the later compilation these have disappeared, but they nevertheless exist in the modified form above mentioned. From Pul-i-Khatun they incline south-east, presenting a scarped face towards the river. The scarp is continued southwards, and is the high cliff which incloses the valley of the Heri-Rud, or Tajand, on the right bank of that river. The slope from the top of this cliff towards the interior of the country is extremely gentle, but at its northern end a fairly well-defined ridge runs eastwards, and bounds the Adam Ulan Valley on the south.

This range is known as the Askhar Lilang Dagh. It terminates in high ground, which appears to turn abruptly south. At all events, the watershed is crossed between Agár-i-Chashma and Kangruali at only a few miles from the latter. From this point northwards to Adam Ulan and the plain south of Kaiún-Kui-usi the country is a mass of broken grassy ridges and undulations divided by small but beautiful valleys. Near

the watershed outcrops of rock are sufficiently frequent to diversify the country and add to its charm, and the hills are in many places covered with pistachio trees. It seems strange there should not be more surface water in this country. Agár-i-Chashma is the only spring any of the guides knew of, and that is very small. But rock and gravel are so near the surface in most places, especially as the watershed is approached, that water could doubtless be obtained in some of the ravines by digging a few feet.

From north of Kangruali the watershed apparently bends north-east, and then, running eastward, passes south of Ilibir, and so along the hills until these terminate some 8 to 12 miles short of the Kushk-Rud at or near a place called Kagazli. I gather from Captain Yate that about Ilibir there are valleys similar to those in the neighbourhood of Agár-i-Chashma, but it is probable that further east the north slopes of the hills are similar to those of the ridge south of the Ak Tapa—Kaiún-Kui-usi road.

No general name could be got for the hills, but when we obtained our first glimpses of them on our second day's march from Ak Tapa, I was informed they were known as the Duz-ung-Kiri, that is, the "hills of the salt," from the salt beds of Yar-oilan, which lie to their south.

On the south side of the hills is a great plateau, 10 or 12 miles wide, and little, if at all, inferior in height to the hills themselves, which may be considered the northern slope of this table-land. The exact topography of the country is still doubtful, although we can now speak with confidence as to its main features. However, there is a distinct dip from the summit-line of the Duz-ung-Kiri, and then a gentle rise to the top of the plateau. It is in this hollow that the second wells passed by Captain Yate are situated, and it appears to drain eastward. The plateau itself is a beautifully grassed table-land about 2,000 feet high, that is, 700 to 1,000 feet higher than the country to the north, and 1,300 to 1,400 feet above the salt lakes of Yar-oilan. These remarkable basins are described by Captain Yate, and I need say nothing about them. The country to their west and south is a singular one, and can be best understood by a reference to the Map accompanying this Report. Ak Rabat was first visited by Captain Peacocke. Captain Yate also went there, and across to Kizil Bulák. I will, therefore, confine myself to some brief notes on the country between the salt lakes and the Heri Rud.

The Kangruali Basin is a depression about 12 miles long from north to south, by some 6 miles in width from east to west. It is bounded by high plateaux to the north, east, and south; and to the west by a line of heights which slope very gently towards the interior of the valley. The latter has no drainage outlet. Its surface is extremely broken and varied by low ridges, hillocks, and plateaux, among which are hollows in which water collects after snow or rain, but very quickly sinks into the ground. Around the western and southern edges, at the base of the steep slopes bounding the valley, is an almost continuous line of these hollows, but none of them had any water when we saw them, although there had been abundance of rain and snow within the last few weeks.

West of the Kangruali Basin are the two sandstone ridges pierced by the Zulfikár defiles, which have already been sufficiently described. There is a sort of narrow valley between the base of the first range and the heights bounding the Kangruali Basin on the west. The great Taka "alamán" road comes down this hollow from Adam Ulan. There is also another broken valley between the ranges. About 9 miles up this, from the Zulfikár road, are the wells of Mulla Hairan Taka, at which raiding parties occasionally halted. From 3 to 5 miles north of Mulla Hairan there is a "dahan" or gap in the sandstone range bounding the Heri-Rud Valley. It is called Dangli. There is another Dangli south of the Zulfikár Pass, but this is also called Zakli, by which name I have marked it on the map. "Dang" or "deng" is Turki for a tower, and in each of these defiles there is a rude stone tower, probably erected as a protection against marauders before the raids of the Turkomans had caused this country to be entirely abandoned, or else as a refuge for the Persian outposts which were stationed along the Heri-Rud to look out for "alamáns."

The Kizil Bulák Valley is sufficiently described in the account previously given of the journey, and it now only remains to make a few remarks on the Adam Ulan Basin.

This is a valley lying nearly east and west, and extending from the high ground at the back of the scarp facing the river valley at Garamáb to Adam Ulan itself. The latter is in a hollow, or ravine, at the north-east corner. The length of the valley is about 14 miles, and its breadth 4 or 5 miles. To the south is the somewhat high

ridge called Askhar Lilang Dagh, and to the north are low hills of the usual character. These curve round, and are joined to the low western end of the Askhar Lilang by high ground over which the road passes. Half-a-mile beyond the top of the rise, a gap in the ridge on the left, is the Garamáb defile. This is about 600 yards in length, and nowhere less than 20 or 30 yards broad. It is wider in the middle. The descent is somewhat steep, about 150 feet according to the aneroid, and the ground, especially near the top, is strewed with loose stones and *débris* of the rocks on either side. Water oozes from the surface of the ground and makes it rather soft in places. The defile is perfectly practicable for artillery. It is so far important that the road along the right bank of the river goes through it, there being apparently no path along the foot of the cliff from Pul-i-Khatun to Garamáb. The country about the top of the defile is entirely open grassy slopes, with a very easy descent to the river below Pul-i-Khatun. The lower end of the defile is exactly opposite the Garamáb ford. Our camels crossed the river to graze on the opposite bank, and the water was fully 8½ feet deep, with a strong current. A horseman would have had some difficulty in getting over. This was on the 21st February.

From the Garamáb defile a path runs along the right bank, and for half-a-mile is rough and difficult, being at the base of the cliff, which here abuts on the river. In high floods it would be impassable. Afterwards a broad grassy flat is traversed, which has a thick fringe of tamarisk jungle near the river. At the end of this the entrance to another defile is reached. It also pierces the rock wall east of the river. It is narrower than the Garamáb defile, and for upwards of 100 yards is rocky and difficult; so much so as to be barely practicable for camels. The remainder of the ascent is easy, and so is the descent into the Adam Ulan Valley. Before quitting the latter, it may be mentioned that it is broken by long grassy ridges and plateaux projecting from the Askhar Lilang range. It has a decided slope to the west and north-west, the road descending in steps, and not by a gradual decline. The drainage of the valley collects near the western end at the foot of the low hills inclosing the valley on the north, and here forms a salt lake known as Kinnikli. There is a salt bed here which is sometimes visited by Taka Turkomans, but the salt is inferior to that of Yar-oilan.

Very few birds or animals were seen in the "chol." Of the former, I think ravens and some small birds only were seen until near the river, when a few sand grouse and large flights of the ruddy sheldrake and geese of some kind passed overhead daily, no doubt migrating northwards. Deer are said to be numerous in the country, but we saw only tracks, and none very fresh. Twice I saw wild donkeys; they are no doubt very plentiful. There was a herd of fully a hundred in the Adam Ulan Valley. Both deer and wild asses, particularly the former, are regularly hunted by the Turkomans for the sake of their flesh and skins. Many foxes are also trapped every year. Their skins fetch a "tanga" each. Wild pig are also common in the "chol." Twice I saw large sounders quite out in the open at a great distance from water or cover. The only other animal *met* with was a porcupine found feeding on a base slope some distance from its earth. Its skin was sent to Dr. Aitchison.

Before referring to the routes which lead through the country under description, it will be convenient to mention in order all the wells now known to exist, whether filled up or not.

1. *Khálim-ung-Korogi.*—Two wells 16 miles from Ak Tapa, on the Sarakhs road. The road from Panjdeh meets that from Ak Tapa at this spot. The wells are situated in a rather deep hollow under the long sandy ridge which runs parallel to the road. One well is completely filled up. The other was cleared out some fifteen or twenty years ago by a Sarik of Panjdeh named Khálim. It is about 145 feet deep, and apparently 2½ to 3 feet in diameter. It is lined with burnt brick. The earth thrown out of the well all round forms an annular mound, so that the mouth of the well appears to be in a small pit, the steep sides of which are of loose earth. This is a very frequent characteristic of wells in the "chol," and quite accounts for their filling up as rapidly as they seem to do; for every shower of rain must wash a certain amount of earth into the well, and every time water is drawn some earth is shaken down from the slopes. This is irrespective of the practice of pitching a brick or two down every well met with to see if there is any water in it, a custom the Turkomans religiously observe, and which must also tend to fill them up. Visitors to the desert wells may not be very numerous, but bricks are always temptingly handy. I am assured that no wells in the "chol," west of the Murghab, have been purposely closed. Every well had originally a brick trough running into a small cistern, which received the water as drawn, very much as is the case in India at the present day. The long

hollow down which the camels that drew the water had to pass is also distinctly observable at almost every well. No water is to be obtained from Khálim-ung-Korogi well at present. But a few years ago 200 horses could be watered at it without difficulty, and only last spring enough water could be got for twenty horses. It is probable that two or three men could completely clear out this well in a day, and as the brick lining of the other old well is almost certain to be complete, that also could most likely be cleared in from seven to ten days.

In the case of these and all similar wells, if required for military purposes, it would be almost a necessity to build up the casing to a foot or two above the present ground-level or top of the mound, and fill in the earth all round it. If this is not done, at least a brushwood casing, such as the Turkomans can themselves make, should be carried up level with the top of the mound, and, of course, the earth filled in.

2. There is said to be an old well somewhere between the Birwat Guzlan Hills and Gok Chelar. It would therefore be from 18 to 25 miles from Ak Tapa, and 3 to 7 miles north of the route to Sarakhs. It is not on any road, and none of our guides had seen it; but there is little doubt it exists, though probably filled up to the mouth.

3. *Roz Baba.*—There is one well at this place, which is between the Dazung Kiri and Khálim-ung-Korogi ridges, about 25 miles from Ak Tapa, and 8 or 10 miles south of the Sarakhs road. The well contained water not long ago, and probably does so still. It is very deep, as deep, the Turkomans say, as the wells of Ilibir (300 feet ?).

4. *Gumbazli Sarik.*—Here are nine or ten wells. They are all filled up to a greater or less extent, and none have yielded water for a good many years; but, before the Takas abandoned this country, on taking possession of Merv, they had a permanent camp here, and the supply from the wells is said to have been inexhaustible. Two wells taken at random were found to be 104 feet and 95 feet deep respectively. The full depth is probably not far short of 150 feet to water. One well near the remains of the "gumbaz" has a lining of burnt brick. Its diameter is about 2 feet. I think the other wells are all "kacha," or unlined, and their diameter is much greater. This would lead one to suppose that the brick lining had fallen in. The soil, at all events near the surface, is too soft and sandy to stand well without support. There is no doubt all these wells can be opened without difficulty. If there is peace, it is not unlikely the Sariks will do it for their own convenience. Gumbazli is 43 miles from Ak Tapa, and 27 miles from Khálim-ung-Korogi. It is probably not much more than 20 miles from Roz Baba.

5. *Kirish (East).*—The first of the two places so called. It is about 4 miles from Gumbazli, on the Sarakhs road. Here are six wells in a slight hollow. They resemble those of Gumbazli, and are all "kacha." None of the wells now yield water, though it is said some of them did a short time ago.

6. *Kirish (Bashaji).*—The second Kirish, 4½ miles from the first, and 51½ miles from Ak Tapa, on the Sarakhs road. There are nine wells at this place, situated, as usual, in a hollow. Three of them contained water on the 17th February; but two of these had only an inch or two, not enough to fill a bucket. The third had about 6 feet of water when we arrived on the evening of the 16th. It ran dry on the afternoon of the next day, most of the camels having then been watered. There was a little water in it again on the morning of the 18th. The depth of this well to the water-level was 145 feet. Two others were respectively 145 feet and 140 feet. The supply of water at this place is said to have been formerly abundant. With a little labour in clearing out the wells it would be so again; but it must be noted that one of the wells is filled up to the top. The water is sweet and good.

7. *Kaiún-Kui-usi.*—"The wells of the sheep." This place is 15 miles from Kirish Bahsaji, and 66½ miles from Ak Tapa on the Sarakhs road. There are five wells in a very slight depression at the north base of a conspicuous sandy hill. Three of these contain water, one is dry, the fifth is filled up to the mouth. Those still in use contain about 6 feet of water each. Two of these are 90 feet deep, the other is 95 feet. They are all "kacha" wells. We made no apparent impression on the water, though we halted at the place three nights. The supply would appear to be, as the Turkomans say it is, inexhaustible. The quality of the water is good. This is now the great watering-place in all the western "chol."

8. *Khum Guzar.*—"The sandy watering-place." There is an old flood-channel of the Tajand. Water is found at a depth of 12 feet in its bed, and there appears to be an abundant supply. Formerly there was a dam, or rather groyne, in the Tajand, which diverted a certain amount of water down this channel, and the Takas used it for

irrigation. This place is two camel stages from Kaiún-Kui-usi, and only 7 or 8 miles from Old Sarakhs, which is actually within sight. Four or five miles down the Kaiún-Kui-usi road are ten or twelve old wells, now filled up. This was no doubt the halting-place of the ancient "kafila" route, 11 to 14 miles from Old Sarakhs, and about 18 miles from Kaiún-Kui-usi.

9. *Nazikabad.*—Half a march (7 or 8 miles) from Old Sarakhs on the Dunmaz road. There is said to be one well, between 30 and 40 feet deep, containing an abundant supply of slightly brackish water.

10. *Gumbazli Taka.*—One well about 7 miles north of Kaiún-Kui-usi, on the Dunmaz road (Taka salt route). Dunmaz is two camel stages (22 to 24 miles) distant. The well is now partly filled up, but it is believed could be easily cleared. It is "paka" (lined with burnt brick), and is said to be of the same depth as the wells at Kaiún-Kui-usi. An old road from Sarakhs, viâ Khum Guzar, passes Gumbazli Taka, and goes on to Khálim-ung-Korogi. There is no water on it.

11. *Taoghar.*—A well near the Taoghar hill. It is said to be west of that elevation, in the direction of Gumbazli Taka, from which place it is probably distant 8 or 10 miles. It is a short march north-east of Kaiún-Kui-usi. The well contained water six or seven years ago. It is not known whether any is obtainable now. The well is "kacha," but could be easily cleared if required.

12. *Dunmaz.*—A well-known place where the Taka salt road from Merv to Yar-oilan crosses the route from Hazrat Imam to Old Sarakhs. There are three wells, but two are filled up. The one open is between 50 and 60 feet deep. It contains a small supply of very brackish but drinkable water. If cleared out, water would be abundant.

13. A well without name, 7½ miles from Kaiún-Kui-usi, in the direction of Adam Ulan. Being in the middle of a nearly flat plain, its mound is observable some distance off. It is filled up to the top.

14. *Adam Ulan.*—There are two small wells, lined with brick, and apparently another which is completely filled up. The open wells are both 20 feet deep, and each contained on the 20th February about 5 feet of good water. They would be all the better for clearing out, but the supply seemed tolerably abundant, and water is near the surface over a considerable area.

15. *Pikehlah.*—This is a place apparently some 5 miles east in a straight line from Adam Ulan. It is on one of the old "alamán" tracks from Kaiún-Kui-usi to Agár-i-Chashma, and is within the hills south of the plain. It is said to contain water.

16. *Ilibir.*—These are wells at 17 and 22 miles from Kaiún-Kui-usi, on the Taka salt road to Yar-oilan. They were visited by Captain Yate (*vide* his Report). All the wells are dry. I am not aware whether Captain Yate mentions that Ilibir means "fifty-one," the wells being supposed to be that number of "kúlúch," or fathoms, deep. If this is correct, they are double the depth of any other wells we saw in the "chol."

17. *Agár-i-Chashma.*—A very small spring, already described in account of journey.

18. *Kangruali.*—These are three brick-lined wells; two nearly opposite the ruined "rabat," the other about 200 yards further north. All are close to, and east of, the camel-track which leads over the hill to Agár-i-Chashma and Adam Ulan.

Of those first mentioned, one is 27 feet deep, and 2 ft. 3 in. in diameter. After being slightly cleared out it contained 1½ feet of muddy and indifferent water. If all the rubbish, which is probably several feet deep, were removed, there is little doubt this well would yield a good supply. The second well, near the first, is a curious little thing, with a crooked shaft, very small in diameter. It is dry. The third well is of the same size as the first, but now filled up nearly to the top.

If all the wells were cleared it may be assumed the supply of water would be considerable.

Kangruali is about 15 miles from Adam Ulan.

19. *Duz-ung Kui-úsí* and *Duz-ung Yap-úsí.*—These are wells east of the Yar-oilan salt lakes, on the Sarik salt road to Panjdeh. They were visited by Captain Yate (see his Report). All the wells are dry. I observe Captain Yate's spelling of the names differs from mine, but I believe I am correct.

20. *Mulla Hairan Taka.*—This is a place on an "alamán" road from Adam Ulan to Zulfikár, about 17 or 18 miles from the former, and 13 or 14 miles from the latter. There are three wells situated in a ravine about 100 yards to the right of the road. The water-level in each was 15 feet from the surface of the ground on the second march. One well is 2½ feet in diameter, and contained 27 feet of water. The second

was 3 feet in diameter, and contained 21 feet of water. The third was 2 feet in diameter, and contained 15 feet of water.

21. There are wells, for which I could get no special name, in one of the ravines north-west of the Chakmakli Hill. These wells are near the Taka "alamán" road which leads southward from Adam Ulan to Kizil Bulák or Karez Ilias. They are probably some 22 or 23 miles from Adam Ulan, and about 25 miles from Kizil Bulák.

22 *Zaḳli or Dangli.*—This is an easy gap through the hills, some 7 miles north of Ao Charmi, through which a road leads to the river, striking it about the same distance above Zulfikár. It also goes to Karez Ilias. There is an old stone tower, and some traces of cultivation. Here are old wells. One is quite close to the tower on the south-west side; another is a short distance north-east. Both these are lined with stone, and of very small diameter. We estimated their depth at 30 or 40 feet. Both are now quite dry, and no doubt partially filled up. There is a similar well 100 yards or so down the valley. It is filled to the top, but the stone work is still visible. A conical hollow at the north-east base of tower is almost certainly a fourth well.

The wells or springs at Karez Ilias, Ao Charmi, Kizil Bulák, Ak Rabat, &c., need not here be described.

The following are such particulars as I have been able to gather regarding the routes which traverse the country described in this Report. As before mentioned, the country, although open, is not such as to permit of men or animals moving easily from point to point, and the beaten paths are generally adhered to.

The most important route is that from Panjdeh or Ak Tapa to Sarakhs. From Kaiún-Kui-usi, the fourth stage, Pul-i-Khatun can be reached viâ Adam Ulan.

Although we travelled by this route to Kaiún-Kui-usi, from which place I went to Garamáb, I will recapitulate the stages for convenience of reference:—

Ak Tapa to—

1. *Khálim-ung-Korogi*, 16 miles. Country undulating. Good road, though soft and sandy. No water at present in well at halting-place. Wood scanty.

2. *Camp in Chol*, no name, 17½ miles (33½ miles). Road good, though a little heavy, over undulating country. No water and no old wells. No firewood.

3. *Kirish Bashaji*, 18 miles (51½ miles). Road and country as before, but a good many bushes. At 9½ miles Gumbazli (Sarik). Here Yuletan salt road crosses. There is also a road to Ilibir, about 15 miles, and at 13½ miles Kirish (No. 1). Old wells at both these places, now partly choked, but might be cleared. Water in one well at halting-place, but not more than enough for half a squadron at the outside. Wells here might be cleared. Wood abundant. A road from here to Ilibir, about 15 miles.

4. *Kaiún-Kui-usi*, 15 miles (66½ miles). Road winds a good deal, and is on the whole softer than before, but more level. Water from three wells at halting-place. Supply abundant. Wood plentiful in neighbourhood. Here the Taka salt road crosses, and the Yuletan "alamán" road comes in.

5. *Khum Guzar*, two camel stages, probably about 24 miles (about 90 miles). Road much as before, but country appears pretty level after the first 6 or 7 miles. Water from holes or pits in the bed of an old flood-channel of Tajand. Supply abundant. Four or five miles before reaching Khum Guzar a number of old wells are passed which might be cleared. A road from here to Nazikabad, about 8 miles north, and another to Shir Tapa, about 18 miles south-west.

6. *Sarakhs*, about 12 miles (total about 102 miles). Old Sarakhs is reached at about 8 miles. There is said to be one well there (and, I presume, a Russian post). Country flat, with some cultivation. Then across the river to Sarakhs.

The route to Garamáb or Pul-i-Khatun is as follows:—

From Ak Tapa to Kaiún-Kui-usi, 66½ miles, as above.

5. *Adam Ulan*, 19 miles. Cross the line south of the Kaiún-Kui-usi wells, and diverging from the salt road, follow an old "alamán" track for 10 miles, and then bend to the right, crossing a low rise, and descending sharply into the Adam Ulan Valley. Water from two small wells, but supply fairly abundant. Wood procurable.

6. *Garamáb*, 16 miles (total 101½ miles). Road runs west down Garamáb Valley, and ascends the rise which closes that basin. It then either goes straight or to the river below Pul-i-Khatun, or turns to the left down the Garamáb defile, to the ford so called. Camp on further bank. Wood abundant.

There is fairly good ground for encampment at all the above stages, except, perhaps, Adam Ulan, where the ground near the water is apt to be wet. The road is everywhere practicable for artillery, but draught would be exceedingly heavy in the sandy soil. Camel grazing and natural grass are both abundant in spring and early summer. Firewood as noted.

The second route is that from Hazrat Imam to Sarakhs. It is, of course, entirely from information given by the Sariks, but it has been checked as carefully as possible, and is no doubt tolerably correct.

Hazrat Imam to :—

1. *Yolai Yurt*, about 19 miles. Road as usual in the "chol." No water at the halting-place, and no old wells. Here the Yuletan "alamán" road divides, turning to the left for Kululan.

2. *Kua Chagah, or Reg-i-Surkh.* Both names mean the same thing; the first is Turki. Distance 11 or 12 miles; total about 30 miles. Road as usual. No water at halting-place, and no old wells. A place is passed on this stage where bricks, &c., are scattered about, and very possibly old wells may exist, but no one knows of any.

3. *Oiyakli*, about 15 miles ; total about 45 miles. No water, no old wells.

4. *Dunmaz, or Ao Shoe*, about 18 miles; total about 63 miles. Water from one well. It is very brackish, but drinkable. Here the Taka salt road from Merv to Yar-oilan crosses.

5. *Nazikabad*, two camel stages; about 22 miles; total 85 miles. Water from one well at Nazikabad, slightly brackish.

6. *Sarakhs*, about 12 miles; total about 97 miles. Old Sarakhs is reached at about 8 miles, and the river is then crossed to Sarakhs.

It is evident that this route is wholly unfitted for a large force, and could only be used by small parties carrying their water with them. Unless, of course, a tremendous train of camels laden with water-skins accompanied the troops, as was the case with Muhammad Amin's expedition.

No. 3. The Yuletan salt road.

This route leaves the Murghab at Igri-Apí, a short distance above Hazrat Imam, and goes to Gumbazli Sarik, which is four camel stages. There is no water on the road, and the halting-places have no names. No old wells are known of in the country traversed by this route. The people coming for salt load their camels with water-skins, which they bury at the halting-place for the return journey. From Gumbazli the route goes straight to the Sarik Rimaksár (the eastern lake). The distance is 2½ camel stages. There is no water, nor old wells, neither have the halting-places any names.

No. 4. The Yuletan "alamán" road.

This route quits the Murghab at Hazrat Imam, and follows route No. 2 to Yalai Yurt, which is about 19 miles. No water.

The next stage is to Kululan, 11 or 12 miles. There is no water at this place.

The third march is to Khan Kiri, a halting-place some miles north of the hill of that name. Distance 22 to 24 miles. No water.

The fourth march is to Kaiún-Kui-usi, 18 miles.

The raiders used to carry water to last them till they got to Kaiún-Kui-usi.

It it said that Turkoman horses in training will go two and even three days without water. Besides, the favourite season for "alamáns" was in January, February, and the beginning of March, when snow is on the ground.

From Kaiún-Kui-usi the "alamáns" generally made for Agar-i-Chashma, or Kangruali, perhaps by way of Pikehlah, but almost always avoiding Adam Ulan. They then went on to Ak Rabat and Gulran, crossing the hills by the Rabat-i-Surkh Pass.

No old wells are known of in the country traversed by this route.

No. 5. The Taka salt road.

The first halt is always made at the edge of the cultivated and watered lands of Merv. Then—

2. *Tash Rabat.* No water.
3. *Shahidli.* A well. Here the road to Sarakhs divides.
4. *Shor Kila.* Wells, with abundant water.
5. Halt in the "chol." No water.
6. *Dunmaz* (already described). One well of brackish water.
7. Halt in the "chol." No water.
8. *Kaiún-Kui-usi* (already described). Wells with abundant water.
9. Halt in the "chol," north of Ilibir. No water.
10. About Ilibir second wells (22 miles from Kaiún-Kui-usi). No water.
11. *Nimaksár.* The western of the Yar-oilan salt lakes. No water.

All the above are camel stages, averaging about 13 miles.

From the Nimaksár the route to Ak Rabat, Gulran, &c., is easy. "Alamáns" sometimes used this route, but it is evidently not one likely to be traversed by large bodies of regular troops, though, no doubt, cavalry might come down it.

No. 6. Route from Sarakhs to Gulran, &c., by what Captain Peacocke terms the Rah Kalán, the "Shah Rah" of Lessar and the old maps. It was almost certainly the old main road from Herat to Sarakhs, but every route along which "rabats" once existed appears to be called a Shah Rah or a Rah Kalan.

Sarakhs to—

1. *Khurt Guzar* (before described), 12 miles. Water abundant.

2. *Adam Ulan*, 2⅓ camel stages, apparently about 30 miles; total, about 42 miles. There is no water on the road, and no old wells are known of, but I am inclined to think they exist, nevertheless.

Adam Ulan has been already described. Water tolerably abundant.

3. *Kangruali*, 15 miles; total, about 57 miles. Through valleys and over gently sloping hills all the way. Water supply at Kangruali would probably be sufficient for a considerable body of men if all the wells were cleared.

4. *Ak Rabát*, 19½ miles, from Captain Peacocke's Report (76½ miles). Some little work would be required on this stage to facilitate the passage of artillery, but not more than could be accomplished by a company of sappers in a single day.

Water, from a number of wells, abundant at Ak Rabát.

5. *Sumba Karez*, 7½ miles (84 miles). Good road. Water from one shaft of an old "karez." There would probably be no difficulty in opening others.

6. *Gulran*, 20 miles (total, 104 miles). Road good. Water abundant at Gulran.

No. 7. Route alternative to the above from Adam Ulan to Kangruali and Zulfikar Pass. This was the principal "alamán" route of the Taka Turkomans.

Adam Ulan to—

1. Wells near Chakmakli, about 22 miles. The road from Adam Ulan follows that to Agar-i-Chashma and Kangruali for a short distance, and then branches to the right, going over hills till it reaches a sort of long narrow valley between the Kangruali Basin and the first sandstone range. It is said to be impracticable for camels, but a very fair road for horsemen. At any rate, it was much used by the raiders, as the deeply-worn tracks testify. No information could be obtained about the wells, and my guides did not know exactly where they were; but there is no doubt they exist, and most probably they contain water.

2. *Ao Charmi*, about 15 miles (total about 37 miles). Easy road, passing close to entrance of first Zulfikár defile. From here to the river at Zulfikár is about 9 miles. At about 8 miles pass Dangli or Zakli, a gap in the hills to the right, through which is an easy road to the river and to Karez Ilias. There are old wells in the gap, as before described. At about 13 miles pass another gap, by which is a road to Karez Ilias, which is only a few miles distant.

This was the route usually taken by the Taka "alamáns." They seldom went to Gulran, which was on the Sarik "alamán" route. The tribes being in a state of active hostility, their raiding parties usually fought with, or fled from, each other, according to their numbers. But a curious arrangement existed between the Takas and the Sariks of Yuletan. As their "alamán" routes lay so close together—and, in fact, "alamáns" from Merv as well as from Yuletan constantly went to Kaiún-Kui-usi—it was found that fighting with each other proved a serious hindrance to business. It was therefore usual for the leaders of "alamáns" to send notice some time before they started to the opposite party; and if an "alamán" was going out from them the leaders exchanged oaths not to meddle with each other during the proposed expedition. These engagements, it is said, were strictly adhered to. No such arrangements, however, were entered into between the Takas and the Sariks of Panjdeh, and their "alamáns" occasionally had encounters with each other. But as the Panjdeh "alamán" route lay viâ Kila Maur, Chaman-i-Bed, and Islim, to Gulran, or else by Kara Tapa to Aktachi-Tutakahi or Kizil Ghol, they were not so likely to encounter the Takas as their brethren of Yuletan. While on this subject, I may remark that the "alamán" routes were those used generally by the "alamáns" going out. On their return they took any road that might be most convenient, and usually travelled at the utmost possible speed.

There is a road from Adam Ulan to Zulfikár, which has been already mentioned. It appears to branch from the one above described (No. 7), and leads to Mulla Hairan, which is between the sandstone ranges east of the Heri-Rud.

Adam Ulan to—

1. *Mulla Hairan Taka.*—About 17 miles. Road said to be impracticable for camels, but "alamáns" travelled by it. It appears to pass the northern Dangli gap at about 10 miles. Abundant water from three wells at Mulla Hairan.

2. *Zulfikár.*—About 13 miles (total about 30 miles). Rather a rough road southwards for 9 miles to the entrance of the second Zulfikár defile. Then westward through that to the river.

In order to arrive at an understanding with regard to the rights and claims of the Sarik Turkomans to the country west of the Murghab, it is necessary to go back some distance in time, to the period when "Yaz-mat Bai," that is Yar Muhammad Beg, was Khan of Khiva. At that date, forty years ago, the Takas occupied the Akhal and the Sarakhs district; the Sariks had the Merv Oasis; the Salors were at Yuletan, and the Arsaris, or a portion of them, at Penjdeh. The Takas were in some sort subjects of Persia, while the Sariks acknowledged the Khan of Khiva, but all the tribes were on the most friendly terms, and their mingled flocks pastured over the whole tract between the Merv Oasis on the north, and Gulran on the south. It is said that even Afghan and Persian nomads grazed their sheep in the same territory and were not molested. However that may be, it is certain that the flocks of both Takas and Sariks pastured together wherever grass was most abundant, and that at times the many thousands of sheep belonging to both tribes might be on the Murghab, and at others in the vicinity of Sarakhs, according to circumstances.

The Takas then had permanent encampments at Gumbazli, now known as Gumbazli Sarik, and at the two places to its west called Kirish, that being, in fact, the name of a Taka section. It is also possible, though by no means certain, that there were more or less permanent settlements of Takas at Kangruali and Ak Rabát.

The wells at all these places, but particularly at the first named, were kept in order by the Taka shepherds, but it must be remembered that they were freely used by the Sariks, and by other Turkomans if their flocks happened to be in the neighbourhood. However, the Salors and Arsaris had no great number of sheep, and, as far as the present discussion is concerned, may be left out of the question.

It cannot be supposed that the districts of Sarakhs, Penjdeh, and Yuletan were very clearly defined, since the amity of the tribes by which they were occupied, and the weakness of the two Governments to which the latter were nominally subject, prevented any question of sovereignty or jurisdiction from arising. That the Takas were then in possession of the territories of Sarakhs may be conceded, and it is probably on account of this original possession that Russian claims to this tract will be raised. It is sufficiently obvious that no existing right can rest on such grounds, not only because the grazing was freely shared by the Sariks, but because the latter had then access to the pasture lands on the Lower Tajand, from which they are now excluded.

In fact, no claims on behalf of either the Sariks or the Takas can be based on a state of affairs which has wholly passed away, and cannot possibly be renewed.

The present situation dates from about thirty years ago, when the Takas, partly on account of their increase in numbers, and partly, perhaps, to free themselves from Persian reprisals, drove the Sariks from the Merv Oasis—not without some hard fighting—and established themselves on their lands. In the present Report it is not necessary to enter into historical details. The main facts are well known already. Forced from Merv the Sariks in turn dispossessed the Salors of Yuletan and the Arsaris of Panjdeh.

Thus the peace and friendship which had formerly united the Turkoman tribes of this region were completely dissipated. The Sariks and Takas are still enemies, and the former have not been forgiven by the Arsaris, although the latter quitted Panjdeh without offering any resistance. They have altogether left the banks of the Murghab, and have no concern with the country to its west. As for the Salors, they are a small and broken tribe, living partly with the Sariks and partly on the Tajand. They have few sheep, and need no pasture-grounds far from their own homes. Thus, the question of pasturage, which may be taken to mean possession, in the country between the Murghab and the Tajand, is entirely one between Sariks and Takas, and its issue is still further narrowed by the fact that the Sariks of Yuletan have a far smaller number of sheep than those of Panjdeh, and that their flocks seldom or never move more than 20 miles from the river.

Since the Takas have been established at Merv and the Sariks at Panjdeh the grazing grounds have necessarily been entirely apart. The principal pasture lands of the former are on the Lower Tajand, while the Sarik flocks are near the Murghab in summer, dispersed over Baghist in autumn, and collected in the "chol" west of Panjdeh in winter. Few flocks go into the eastern "chol" on account of the Arsaris, who are always ready to carry them off when an opportunity offers itself, and it

appears that the Sariks have found the depredations of this tribe more difficult to guard against than those of the Takas.

The requirements of sheep are, of course, food and water. In damp climates, such as that of England, sheep drink very little; in fact, it may be said that, except in summer, they do not drink at all. In hot, dry climates, where there is no rain and very little precipitation of moisture in the shape of dew, they require to be watered every second or third day. In certain very dry countries, sheep, like other animals, have become adapted to their surroundings, and will go without water for a longer time, but this is exceptional. Sheep, when grazing, move at from 6 to 10 miles a-day. When driven without grazing, they can do 12 to 15. On this basis, Mr. Merk's estimate of 25 miles as the extreme limit to which sheep can go from water is pretty correct for a dry climate, or for the summer months in this region. But in spring, when there is a good deal of rain, the sheep of the Turkomans go for a week or ten days without water, and in winter, when they can eat snow, they do not require to drink for a much longer period.

Consequently, the absence of water does of necessity preclude sheep grazing over a country, and there is no tract in the territory under discussion so waterless that sheep cannot cross it in winter. As for the shepherds, the snow that suffices for the sheep does also for them. They have, moreover, donkeys which carry their water-skins, food, and the felts or rugs in which they wrap themselves at night.

The following is a summary of such facts as I have been able to gather regarding the grazing area and grazing customs of the Sarik Turkomans from the time of their establishment in their present settlements, up to last year, when certain changes have taken place which will be further alluded to.

The vast flocks of Pandjeh, numbering, it is said, nearly 150, of which each flock contains from 1,000 to 1,500 head,* are pastured in winter in the "chol" west of the Murghab as before stated. The flocks kept pretty much together, and the shepherds of every ten or fifteen chose a "khan," who directed their movements, selecting the pasture ground, and deciding when it was advisable to change it. The whole mass of sheep appear to have been confined at this season to a comparatively small tract extending not more than 20 miles west of the river. This was not for convenience of watering, as the sheep did not require to drink, but in order that they might not be exposed to Taka raids. For the more effectual protection of the flocks a grazing guard was always maintained. This was organized and led by the principal sheep-owners, who paid men to serve on it from time to time, often furnishing them with arms and horses. The strength of this protecting party, or "karáwal," was calculated at either one or two horsemen to each flock, so that their total number amounted to about 200.

The "karáwal" head-quarters were at Khalim-ung-Korogi, where there was a sufficiency of water for them until very lately. There was also the snow on which they could fall back in case of necessity. From the main body patrols were frequently sent out in various directions. These patrols always went to Gumbazli Sarik on the west, and also a certain distance to the north-west and south-west. There was a curious custom in force of making these patrols bring back something to show that they had actually been to the places they were required to visit. In the first instance a leader went himself, and buried some small article, which the first patrol had to bring back, burying in turn articles given them for the purpose; and so on with the succeeding patrols.

The approximate grazing limits in the western "chol" are shown on the Map by a broad red line, and the extent of country covered by the scouts or patrols is indicated by a dotted red line.

On the break up of the winter and the approach of the lambing season, that is about the end of February, the flocks returned to the neighbourhood of the settlements on the Murghab. The lambing ewes were now separated from the remainder, and taken to their owners' houses to be properly cared for. Ten days or so after birth, the lambs were considered old enough to travel, and joined the flocks with their mothers.

The whole of the sheep remained for the next four or five months in the neighbourhood of the Murghab or Kushk-Rud. The first shearing ("kal") took place as soon as the lambing season was well over, that is about the end of March or beginning of April, and the flocks continued to graze within easy reach of the rivers, from Urush Doshan to the vicinity of Kala-i-Maur, until the second shearing, which took place in

* The year before last (1883) the Afghan Governor of Panjdeh took revenue at the rate of 1 tanga per ten sheep on 194,250 head.

"tirima," or apparently about the end of August. During this period, the weather being hot, the sheep were watered every other day. Posts of twenty or thirty sowars were still kept up at Yalghuli and Kala-i-Maur; but there was little fear of the sheep being carried off, as few "alamáns" went out at this season.

As soon as the second shearing was over, the flocks began to move away south and west, and dispersed over a great extent of country. They might then be found at Kila Wali, Bala Murghab, Kara Tapa, Islim, Akhtachi Tutakchi, and Gulran, as well as over the greater part of the Jamshidi and Suni Hazara country. In fact, many flocks went at some time or other to Kila Nao and Kushk, as the shepherds renewed their supplies of food at those places. But the favourite grazing ground, and one to which the greatest numbers of flocks resorted, was the neighbourhood of Gulran, or, as the Turkomans call it, Guslang, where water and pasture are both abundant. A "karáwal" of about sixty sowars was maintained at Kazal Ghol, which sent patrols to Ak Rabát.

In December or November the flocks began to move back again towards Panjdeh, and by the beginning or middle of January they were assembled on their grazing ground, about Khalim-ung-Korogi.

The past tense has been used in describing the movements of the Sarik flocks, but it is to be understood that the same shifting of the sheep from one grazing ground to another still continues, with this important exception, that now there is no fear of Taka "alamáns" the winter grazing ground is indefinitely extended. This year the flocks pastured without protection of any kind, quite up to the furthest points visible by their patrols when raiding parties had to be looked out for, that is, up to the dotted red line on the Map, and in some instances passed beyond it. For instance, many recent traces of sheep were found about Kangruali; while Captain Yate met large flocks in the neighbourhood of the Sarik Nimaksár. There is no reason why they should not have gone to Gumbazli, Kaiún-Kui-usi, and Adam Ulan, if the shepherds had so chosen. But previous to the Russian occupation of Sarakhs and Merv the whole country beyond the space covered by the Sarik "karáwals," that is outside of the dotted red line, has been a veritable no man's land, traversed only by "alamáns" of both Takas and Sariks, and by the Merv salt caravans, to which I shall again have occasion to refer.

The Takas abandoned this tract when they left Sarakhs for Merv. For the last twenty-five years, at least, they have not been able to send a single sheep south of the road from Sarakhs to Hazrát Imám, running through Dunmaz, Oiyakli, &c. They would have been at once swooped upon by the Sariks had they done so. The latter, it is true, have been equally unable to use this country; but if it does not belong to them, it can hardly be said to pertain to anybody else. They will certainly begin to graze over it next year, unless prevented; while the Takas, who might during the present winter have brought their flocks down if they chose, have shown no signs of doing so. In fact, they seem to be sufficiently well provided with pasture land elsewhere, and are under no inducement to send their flocks so far south. It is true that the Sariks, when at Merv, used to graze their flocks over the tract in question, but the conditions then existing were so far removed from those which prevail at present that the cases are not parallel, and no reasoning founded on the one can be applied to the other.

Inclosure 2 in No. 13.

Memorandum on the "Nimaksár," or the Salt Lakes of Yeroilán.

YEROILÁN means the sunken ground, and nothing can better describe the general appearance of the valley of these lakes.

The country around consists of undulating downs, the height of the road over the last ridge just to the north of the valley being, according to my aneroid barometer, some 2,550 feet, and over the Bund-i-Dozan, on the ridge forming the eastern end of the valley some 2,578 above sea level. The crest of the plateau at the commencement of the descent into the valley being about 2,390 feet.

The total length of the valley from the Kungruali road on the west to the Bund-i-Dozan which bounds it on the east, is about 30 miles and its greatest breadth about 11 miles, divided into two parts by a connecting ridge which runs across from north to south with an average height of about 1,822 feet, but has a narrow hill rising some 400 feet higher upon it.

The Western (or Téké) Lake.—To the west of this lies the lake from which the Téké Turkomans from Merv get their salt. The valley of this lake is some 6 miles square, and surrounded on all sides by a steep, almost precipitous, descent, impassable for baggage animals so far as I am aware except by the Merv road, in the north-east corner. The level of the lake I made to be about 1,432 feet above sea level, which gives it a descent of some 400 feet from the level of the connecting ridge of some 950 feet from the plateau on the downs above. The lake lies in the centre of the basin, and the supply of salt is apparently unlimited. The bed of the lake is one solid hard mass of salt, perfectly level, and covered by only an inch or two of water. To ride over it was like riding over ice or cement; it was covered with a slight sediment, but when that was scraped by a stick the pure white salt shone out below. How deep this deposit may be it is impossible to say as no one has ever got to the bottom of it.

The Eastern (or Sarik) Lake.—To the east of the dividing ridge is the lake from which the Sariks from Panjdeh take their salt. The valley of this lake is much the larger of the two; not counting the sloping downs at the eastern end, the valley proper of the lake is still some 15 miles in length, by about 10 miles in breadth. The descent to it is precipitous on the north and west sides only; the eastern and south-eastern end sloping gradually up in a succession of undulations.

The level of this lake is apparently considerably lower than that of the other. My aneroid made it only 812 feet above sea level; but this and all the other barometrical readings have yet to be corrected.

The salt in this lake is not so smooth as in the other, and did not look so pure. It is dug out in flakes or strata of generally about 4 inches in thickness, and is loaded into bags on camels and carried off for sale without any further preparation.

The Sariks of Yuletan still seem to take their salt from this lake, as I heard of a party of them having just left.

A large party of Tékés from Merv had been down for salt ten days or a fortnight before my arrival. We saw the footmarks of their camels at Khowin Ghoisi, and the marks of their encampment on the banks of the western lake were still fresh.

The Merv Road.—The following is the route from Merv to the lake:—

1st March.—Merv to the confines of habitation in the oasis.

2nd March.—Das Rabat, *i.e.*, Rabat built of stone; no water.

3rd March.—Shehitli. Shehit means thirst. A man died there of thirst. No water.

4th March.—Yoligurdi, or the place where the road forks, one branch going to Sarakhs. No water.

5th March.—Gumbazli (Téké), old dry well.

6th March.—Kowin Ghoisi, *i.e.*, the sheep well. Plenty of water; 8 miles.

7th March.—Elibir, old wells. So named from the supposition that they are 51 fathoms in depth; the first set of dry wells being about 17 miles, and the second about 22 miles, from Kowin Ghoisi.

8th March.—Nimaksar, 9 miles to the ridge from the second set of dry wells. The road runs down an easy gradient of some three-quarters of a mile in length on to the dividing ridge between the two lakes, and turning west winds down amongst the ridges to the lake. It took me more than two hours to ride down to the lake from the plateau above on a fast-walking pony.

This road is well-worn throughout its course, and has evidently been the highroad for ages. Long hollows and depressions now unused still marks its course in former times. This road is the only approach to the lakes from the north, the cliffs all along that side being almost everywhere precipitous.

The Yuletan Road.—The road from Yuletan by which the Sariks of that place get their salt, runs from Yuletan for three marches up the banks of the Murghab to Aigri Yapi, thence four marches across the desert without water to Gumbazli (Sarik), from which place it joins into the Merv road at the second or southern set of dry wells at Elibir, although there is also an old track which runs on direct to the road at the crest of the plateau just before the commencement of the desert.

Some 200 yards above the point where the road to the western lake turns off to the right, the road to the eastern lake turns off to the left and winds down into the valley below, and round the southern edge of the lake to the camping ground on a sandy mound on the south-east. Elsewhere, with the exception of one spot on the northern side, the banks of the lake are too soft and muddy to permit of near approach. Curiously enough I found the shore of the lake at this camping place strewn with fossil, cockle and oyster shells, and apparently bits of flint.

The Panjdeh Road.—The Panjdeh road is another well worn track—

First march runs from Panjdeh for some miles up the Kushk Valley to a place called Akchagaya, or the white precipice, where it leaves the Killa Maur road, and turns off to the west into the "chol," or desert, to—

1. *Baganjkiri.*.—No water.
2. *Karguzli.*—A plain. No water.
3. *Yadiaram,* or the seven hollows, so named from the constant undulations of the road. No water.
4. *Dozan Yapithi,* or the salt Kotal—the descent into the valley below. A few miles beyond lie some old dry wells on the road side, called Dozan Ghoisi, or the salt wells. Whether the water was salt or not is not known, but if sweet they were of some importance, as there is no drinkable water nearer to the "nimaksar" than Ak Robat.
5. *Ujarlak,* or the place of the Ujar trees, so named from the quantity of this wood about, affording an excellent supply of fuel.
6. *Nimaksar.*—On the banks of the lake.

The Panjdeh salt is usually carried during the three autumn months. In the early spring the men are busy sowing, then comes the gambling season. During the summer there is a fly in the desert whose bite is fatal to camels, and at that time they keep all the camels at Panjdeh; only grazing them in the cool hours; as soon though as the crops have been reaped and the men are at leasure, the trade commences and is carried on till the winter sets in.

Salt sells in the Panjdeh bazaar, I am told, at an average rate of about 2 Turkoman "máns" for a kran. A Turkoman, "mán," equals 2½ Herati, "máns," the latter, I believe, is about 4 seers Indian; so that about 20 seers, or half an Indian maund, sells for 1 kran, or 6⅓ annas.

The Maruchak Road.—The old Nimaksár and Maruchák road runs off from the Panjdeh road at the top of the ascent at Dozan Japithi, and, though now quite unused, its course can be easily traced across the downs in an easterly direction towards Killa Mur.

The Islim Road.—Another road runs off from the banks of the lake in a south-easterly direction to Islim; it is also a well-worn road, as by it all the salt is taken to supply the Hazaras at Kila-nou and the Jamshidis at Kushk.

It appears that these two tribes do not come and take their own salt, but that the Sariks of Panjdeh drive a regular trade in supplying them. Salt selling at Kila-Nou and Kushk, so far as I can gather, at double the price it sells at in Panjdeh.

The Sarakhs Road.—The Salors from Sarakhs will take their salt, I presume, from the western lake.

The Sarakhs road runs viâ—

(1.) Kumguzar. Water obtainable from a well.
(2.) Tekkri, a high mound. No water.
(3.) To Khowin Ghoisi and thence down the Merv road.

The Ak Robát Road.—One more road from the Nimaksár remains to be noted, and that is the one running to Ak Robát, some 13 or 14 miles to the south.

Ak Robát is of importance in connection with the Nimaksár, as it is the only place in the vicinity where water is procurable. The only water in any other direction is at Khowin Ghoisi, 30 miles to the north.

Taxation.—The salt at Nimaksár is entirely untaxed. The lakes are looked upon as a provision of nature, free to all, and anybody may go and dig as much as he pleases. The same rule prevails, I am told, with reference to the salt mines near Herat, and no taxes, I believe, are anywhere levied by the Herat Government on salt.

In past years both the Tékés and the Sariks only came for salt in large well-armed parties, and no one else I fancy dared to come at all. Each party was afraid of the other, but by tacit agreement each did its best to avoid the other, neither side ever crossing the dividing ridge between the two lakes or attempting to interfere with the other.

Right of Possession.—The eastern lake undoubtedly belongs to Panjdeh, and the possession of the greater part of the valley ought by rights to carry with it the possession of the whole.

That Russia means to claim part is clear from the establishment of the Akhal-Téké post of twelve sowars at Ak Robát, but the only grounds upon which she can claim it are, I presume, from the fact that the Tékés have always taken their salt from there, a negative claim at the best considering that the lake was free to all and that there was nobody else to go there.

I see no reason why the Tékés should not continue to take their salt as formerly; but supposing Pul-i-Khatun to be the southern limit of the Russian boundary and that a line will be drawn from there to the north-east in the direction of Sari Yazi on the Murghab, there is every reason that the line should not be taken round so far south as to include this lake, which is already covered by the Afghan posts at Garmab and Zulfikár on the west, and only requires the location of a similar post at Khowin Ghoisi on the north to cover it on all sides.

Khowin Ghoisi.—Khowin Ghoisi is undoubtedly an important position, commanding as it does the road from both Merv and Sarakhs, and possessing almost the only water supply in the "chol" or desert to the north of the salt lakes between the Murghab and the Heri-Rud.

I have already noticed in my notes on the Sariks how important this place is to Panjdeh, and that the wells at Khowin Ghoisi seem to belong to and to form the natural limit of Afghanistan on the southern border of the desert.

(Signed) C. E. YATE, *Captain,*
Political Officer.

Camp, Gulran, March 5, 1885.

No. 14.

Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden to Earl Granville.—(*Received April* 29, 10·45 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Tirpul, April* 25, 1885.

IF reports that settlement has been effected with Russia are true, I respectfully submit necessity of fixing definite Afghan limits at home, instead of leaving the demarcation to any Commission. This to be done at once from the Reports and Maps in your Lordship's possession.

No. 15.

Earl Granville to Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April* 30, 1885, 5·5 P.M.

POINT not yet arrived at where we could enter upon negotiations for the settlement of a frontier; but should a direct agreement be come to with Russia, full weight will be given to the views set forth in your telegram of the 25th instant as to settlement in London of frontier-line.

No. 16.

The Earl of Kimberley to the Viceroy of India.

(Telegraphic.) *India Office, May* 4, 1885.

WE shall resume at once here Afghan frontier negotiation. Russian Government had already informed us that they would agree to yield Zulfikar Pass in return for Penjdeh, the frontier in that case to start from a point on Heri-Rud a little to north of Zulfikar, and thence passing south of Ak Robat to join Egri Gueuk near Karez Souma, whence to follow Russian line described in my telegram of 7th February. We propose to accept in principle this arrangement, which would leave to Ameer the three points, namely, Zulfikar, Gulran, and Maruchak, to which you informed me in your telegram of 4th April he attached special importance. The whole agreement to be ultimately embodied in a Convention between us and Russia.

Let me have any observations you may desire to make on this with least possible delay.

No. 17.

Earl Granville to Lieutenant-General Sir P. Lumsden.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 4, 1885.*

IN your telegram of the 25th ultimo you state that in the event of a settlement having been arrived at with Russia, it would be advisable that the limits of the frontier should be settled in London instead of leaving them to be determined by the Commission, and that the Reports and Maps which you have sent home will enable this to be done.

Her Majesty's Government agree in these views, and as negotiations will be resumed in London at once, it is desirable that you and Colonel Stewart should come home immediately.

You should leave Colonel Ridgeway in charge of the Commission for the present.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 18.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *May 5, 1885.*

IN reply to your telegram of 4th, I beg to state that, as we have ascertained that the retention of Penjdeh is a matter of indifference to the Ameer, and as the proposal to draw the line to the north of Maruchak, Gulran, and the Pass of Zulfikar satisfies his requirements in other respects, the Government of India sees no reason to object to a settlement on the proposed basis.

No. 19.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 5, 1885.*

M. DE STAAL called at the Foreign Office this morning by appointment. Lord Kimberley was present at the interview.

I stated to his Excellency that I felt sure that he would agree with me that it was desirable that there should be as little delay as possible in coming to an understanding with regard to the frontier-line of Afghanistan, the main points of which it was now agreed between the two Governments should be settled in London, leaving the details to be examined and traced on the spot by the Commission.

After some conversation, it was decided that we should have a meeting on the 7th instant, at which M. de Lessar should be present.

I stated that, if we succeeded in coming to an agreement, it should be recorded in a Convention; but there was, I said, a point on which I should be glad to have his Excellency's opinion, namely, whether it would be necessary before signing the Convention to wait until all the details of the boundary-line had been settled on the spot by the Commissioners, or whether it would be sufficient that the chief points should have been settled, leaving the details to be worked out.

M. de Staal said that he had no authority to say anything with regard to a Convention, although personally he thought that his Government would be prepared to conclude one. He promised at once to ask for instructions on the subject, and of the time when it could be signed.

I mentioned that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government, in view of the change which had taken place in the scope of the duties which would devolve upon the Commissioners, to summon Sir Peter Lumsden to come to London, and to leave one of the other officers of a lower rank (Colonel Ridgeway) to do the work, which would be one of detail.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 20.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 8, 1885.

I TRANSMIT herewith a proposal for the Afghan frontier which has been provisionally agreed upon with the Russian Ambassador.

His Excellency informed me to-day that he hoped the Russian Government would accept it, but that there was a certain margin as to which he was not sure. In reply to an inquiry from me, he said that his Government agreed to the principle of a Convention on the subject, but that, in their opinion, it should not be signed until the frontier was completely settled. He proposed that the present agreement should be recorded in a Protocol.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Draft.

THE line will start from a point on the Heri-Rud a little to the north of Zulfikar, fixed so as to leave the pass of Zulfikar to the Afghans. Thence it will pass between Akrobat and Souma-Karez, and will run to Islim, where it will pass to the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, leaving Islim outside the Afghan territory. Thence it will follow the crests of the hills bordering the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, and leaving Chemen-i-Bid outside the Afghan frontier, it will follow in the same manner the crests of the hills bordering the right bank of the Kushk as far as Hauzi Khan. Thence the frontier will follow almost a straight line to a point on the Murghab a little above the Bund Nadir, which will remain to Russia.

From this latter point the line towards Khoja-Saleh shall be traced by the Commission within the limits of a zone extending 30 versts north of the line proposed by Russia. It is understood that the line shall be fixed in such a manner as to leave the cultivated territory to the Afghans, and to fix in an equitable manner the limits of the pastures belonging to the populations placed respectively under the sovereignty of Russia and Afghanistan.

The northern limit of the zone will pass to the north of Duktchi, and then direct to Khoja-Saleh.

May 7, 1885.

No. 21.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 9, 1885.

M. DE STAAL informed me to-day that he had received a communication from the Russian Government, stating that the explorations of the Russian officers in the neighbourhood of the Afghan frontier had not extended beyond the line of their posts between the Heri-Rud and the Murghab, and therefore that an agreement in London could only relate to the main points of the frontier, the details of which would be settled by the Commissioners on the spot.

Besides the negotiations relating to that part of the frontier, there had been a divergence of views between the two Governments with regard to the bouudary-line from Khoja Saleh to Sari-Koul, which might also require examination by a Commission.

As the object of a Convention would be finally to remove all cause for misunderstanding or dispute, the Russian Government thought it would be more practical to postpone it, and meanwhile to sign a Protocol only, relating to the points agreed upon between the two Governments in London.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 22.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, May* 11, 1885, 6·30 P.M.

FOLLOWING statement made in Parliament to-day:—

The reference to the judgment of the Sovereign of a friendly State having been agreed to as already stated, and no apprehension being felt as to the settlement of details on that point, several meetings were held between Lord Granville, Lord Kimberley, M. de Staal, and M. Lessar on the subject of the delimitation of the boundary.

They have arrived substantially at an agreement which is satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government and to Lord Dufferin and his Council, and which has been communicated to the Russian Government.

No. 23.

Earl Granville to Colonel Ridgeway.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 11, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador communicated to me on the 30th ultimo* a telegram from his Government proposing that Penjdeh should be neutralized pending a settlement of the frontier question, in order to secure tranquillity in the district.

Her Majesty's Government have accepted the proposal subject to certain conditions which have been agreed to by the Russian Government. Under the arrangement as adopted Russian and Afghan officers and soldiers are prohibited from entering or remaining in Penjdeh pending the delimitation of the frontier.

It is further agreed that the limits of Penjdeh for this purpose extend only to the point north of Maruchak at which it was proposed in the Russian note of the 16th January, 1885, that the boundary line should pass through the valley.

I have to instruct you to communicate the above arrangement to the Afghan authorities, and to urge upon them its strict observance.

It is to take effect as soon as the Commander of the Russian detachment at Dash-Kepri has been made acquainted with it by his Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 24.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 11, 1885.

YOU will have observed that M. de Giers proposed, in a telegram which was communicated to me by M. de Staal on the 17th ultimo,† that the escort of the Afghan Boundary Commission should not exceed 100 men at most for each side, and that no increase should be allowed without an understanding between the two Commissioners.

I have to request your Excellency to suggest to M. de Giers that the numbers of the escort should be fixed by the Commission on the spot.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

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* See "Central Asia No. 5 (1885)," pp. 38–39.

† No. 11

No. 25.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 12, 1885.

I FIND that the Russian Ambassador is doubtful whether the statements made in Parliament on behalf of Her Majesty's Government may not be construed as meaning that his Excellency has the power to conclude an Agreement.

I therefore willingly consented to make a further statement, using his own description, as to what has taken place, which was as follows:—

"Lord Granville, Lord Kimberley, M. Lessar, and himself have agreed to a draft Arrangement relating to the delimitation of Afghanistan. He has submitted this draft to the judgment of his Government, giving it his support."

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 26.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 12, 1885.

THE Earl of Kimberley met M. Lessar this afternoon by appointment at the Foreign Office, Mr. Philip Currie being present at the interview.

M. Lessar stated that the Russian Government raised the following points on the draft Agreement which M. de Staal had transmitted to St. Petersburgh:—

1. They desired a more exact definition of the "Zulfikar Pass." It was agreed, after some discussion, that it might be defined as the "Zulfikar Pass" marked on the English maps.

2. They demurred to the introduction of Duktchi as the northern limit of the zone towards Khoja-Saleh, as they could not find it on the Russian maps. M. Lessar did not think that when they saw our map, of which a copy had been forwarded to St. Petersburgh, they would make any difficulty as to Duktchi.

3. The Russian Government asked that instead of the line proceeding, as the draft proposed, to a point a little above the Bund Nadir on the Murghab, it should only be now fixed as far as Hauzi Khan, and that from thence a line should be drawn between Maruchak and Bala Murghab, so as to form the southern limit of a zone of discussion.

M. Lessar stated that the reasons for this demand were that in the Memorandum attached to my note of the 13th March the line of boundary was defined as running "along the skirts of the cultivation of Maimena and Andkhoi to Khodja-Saleh," whereas Her Majesty's Government now asked for the pastures beyond the "cultivation," and that there were Sariks as far as Maruchak, and even south of that place, who ought not to be separated from the rest of the tribe. M. Lessar also alluded to the works of irrigation as extending south of the Bund Nadir.

Lord Kimberley replied that Maruchak had always been considered by Her Majesty's Government as a place which must be left to the Afghans, and that he was unable to agree to this new demand. All he could do was to report what M. Lessar had said to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 27.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 16, 1885.

THE Earl of Kimberley met M. Lessar again at the Foreign Office this morning, for the purpose of further discussing the proposed frontier-line, Mr. Currie being also present.

Lord Kimberley stated that, after consulting his colleagues, he could only repeat what he had said at the last interview with M. Lessar (recorded in my despatch

of the 12th instant), that Her Majesty's Government considered it essential that Maruchak should be left in the possession of the Afghans, but that apart from this point he was ready to reconsider the wording of the draft, a copy of which was sent to your Excellency in my despatch of the 8th instant, so as to remove, if possible, the objections raised by the Russian Government.

After some discussion, certain modifications were agreed to in the draft, and a further copy as amended is inclosed for your information.

Lord Kimberley subsequently called on M. de Staal, who said he would transmit these modifications immediately to St. Petersburgh, and that although he could not take upon himself to accept them, he would recommend them to his Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Projet.

LA frontière partira du Hériroud un peu au nord du point marqué "Zulficar Pass" sur la carte attachée au Protocole, en laissant ce passage aux Afghans. De là elle passera entre Akrobat et Souma Karez et se dirigera sur Islim où elle passera à la rive droite de l'Egri Geuk en laissant Islim en dehors du territoire Afghan. De là elle suivra les crêtes des collines qui bordent la rive droite de l'Egri Geuk et laissant Cheméné-bid en dehors de la frontière Afghane elle suivra de la même manière les crêtes des collines qui bordent la rive droite du Kushk jusqu'à Hauzi Khan. De là la frontière suivra une ligne presque droite jusqu'à un point sur le Murghab au nord de Meruchak, de manière à laisser à l'Afghanistan Meruchak avec ses dépendances.

A partir de ce point la ligne de démarcation suivra la crête des hauteurs qui bordent au nord la vallée du Kaisor et à l'ouest celle du Sangalak (Ab-i-Andkhoi) et rejoindra Khoja Saleh sur l'Amou-Daria, en laissant à l'Afghanistan les terres cultivées de Maimaneh et d'Andkhoi ainsi que les pâturages voisins de ces terres, dont les habitants de Maimaneh et d'Andkhoi jouissaient à l'époque de l'occupation de Merw par la Russie.

(Signé) P. W. CURRIE.
P. LESSAR.

Foreign Office, le 7 Mai, 1885.

(Translation.)

THE frontier will start from the Heri-Rud a little to the north of the point marked "Zulfikar Pass" on the Map attached to the Protocol, leaving that pass to the Afghans. Thence it will pass between Ak-Robat and Souma-Karez, and will run to Islim, where it will pass to the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, leaving Islim outside Afghan territory. From thence it will follow the crests of the hills which border the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, and leaving Chemen-i-Bid outside the Afghan frontier, it will follow, in the same manner, the crests of the hills bordering the right bank of the Kushk as far as Hauzi Khan. Thence the frontier will follow almost a straight line to a point on the Murghab to the north of Maruchak, so as to leave Maruchak and its dependencies to Afghanistan.

From thence the line of demarcation will follow the crest of the heights which border to the north the valley of the Kaisor, and to the west that of the Sangalak (Ab-i-Andkhoi), and will run to Khoja Saleh on the Amu-Daria, leaving to Afghanistan the cultivated lands of Maimeneh and Andkhoi, together with the pastures in the neighbourhood of those lands, of which the inhabitants of Maimeneh and Andkhoi were in possession at the period of the occupation of Merv by Russia.

(Signed) P. W. CURRIE.
P. LESSAR.

Foreign Office, May 7, 1885.

No. 28.

Earl Granville to Colonel Ridgeway.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 19, 1885.

THE Russian Ambassador communicated to me on the 17th ultimo* a telegram from his Government proposing that the escort of the Boundary Commission should not exceed 100 men for each side, and that no increase of that number should take place without an understanding between the two Commissions.

Before replying to this proposal Her Majesty's Government wish to be informed whether you see any objection to it, or whether you are of opinion that it would be better that the numbers of the escort should be fixed by the Commissioners of the two Powers on the spot.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 29.

Memorandum communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, May 21, 1885.

L'OCCUPATION Afghane de Pendjdé nous ayant empêché d'investiguer territoires à délimiter, sommes forcés d'être très circonspects en ce qui regarde tracé de frontière. En vue de cette considération croyons devoir définir tracé de manière suivante: frontière partirait du Hériroud un peu au nord du point marqué "Zulfagar Pass," sur carte Anglaise, suivrait dans la direction est et sud les crêtes des hauteurs qui bordent la vallée du Hériroud, et ensuite elle passerait entre Ak-Robat et Soumé Kehrez et se dirigerait sur Islim, où elle passerait sur la rive droite de l'Egri-Geuk en laissent Islim en dehors du territoire Afghan. De là elle suivrait les crêtes de collines qui bordent la rive droite de l'Egri-Geuk et laissant Chemeni-bed en dehors de la frontière Afghane, elle suivrait de la même manière les crêtes des collines, qui bordent la rive droite du Koushk jusqu'à Hauzi Khan, d'où elle se dirigerait vers un point sis au nord de Maroutchak de façon à rattacher autant que possible au territoire Russe les terrains cultivés par les Turcomans Saryks et leurs pâturages. Sauf application de ce même principe, frontière à l'est du Murghab serait tracé dans une zone entre les hauteurs indiquées sur notre carte et bordant au nord et à l'ouest les vallées du Kaisor et du Sangalak et les limites des terrains cultivés de Maiméné et d'Andkhoi faisant partie du territoire Afghan et aboutirait à Khodja-Saleh. La délimitation des pâturages appartenant aux peuplades respectives serait abandonnée aux Commissaires; dans le cas où ceux-ci ne parviendraient pas à s'entendre, elle sera effectuée par les deux Cabinets sur la base des cartes dressées et signées par les Commissaires.

Si le Cabinet de Londres tenait à une extension des pâturages Afghans à côté de Maiméné et d'Andkhoi ainsi qu'à celle des limites de Zoulfagar de façon toutefois à assurer notre territoire contre incursions de bandes qui voudraient profiter de cette passe, nous pourrions y consentir à la condition que Maroutchak nous fût cédé et que la frontière fût fixé au nord de Bala Murghab.

(Translation.)

THE Afghan occupation of Penjdeh having prevented us from investigating the territory to be delimited, we are obliged to be very circumspect as regards the frontier-line. In view of this consideration, we think it right to define the line in the following manner: the frontier would start from the Heri-Rud a little to the north of the point marked "Zulfikar Pass" on the English Map, would follow the crests of the heights which border the valley of the Heri-Rud in an easterly and southerly direction, and would then pass between Ak-Robat and Souma Karez and run to Islim, where it would pass to the right bank of the Egri-Gueuk, leaving Islim outside Afghan territory. From thence it would follow the crests of the hills which border the right bank of the Egri Gueuk, and leaving Chemen-i-Bid outside the Afghan frontier, it would follow in the same manner the crests of the hills bordering the right bank of the Kushk as far as Hauzi Khan, from whence it would run to a point situated to the north of Maruchak in such a way as to comprise as much as possible within Russian

* No. 11.

territory the lands cultivated by the Sarik Turkomans, and their pastures. Applying this same principle, the frontier to the east of the Murghab would be traced in a zone between the heights shown on our map and bordering to the north and west the valleys of the Kaïsor and of the Sangalak, and the limits of the cultivated lands of Maimeneh and Andkhoi, forming part of the Afghan territory, and would end at Khoja Saleh. The delimitation of the pastures belonging to the respective populations would be left to the Commissioners; in the event of their not arriving at an understanding, it shall be settled by the two Cabinets on the basis of the maps drawn up and signed by the Commissioners.

Should the Cabinet of London desire an extension of the Afghan pastures near Maimeneh and Andkhoi, as well as of the limits of Zulfikar, in such a manner, however, as to secure our territory against the incursions of bands who might take advantage of this pass, we would consent to it on condition that Maruchak should be ceded to us, and the frontier fixed to the north of Bala Murghab.

No. 30.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 21, 1885.

IT would be desirable that Her Majesty's Government should be informed of the precise date when the arrangement proposed by Russia and accepted by this country, with regard to the neutralization of Penjdeh pending the work of delimitation, may be considered in force; and I have to request your Excellency to address an inquiry to M. de Giers in this sense.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 31.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 21, 1885.

THE Earl of Kimberley met M. Lessar to-day at the Foreign Office in order to hear any explanations that he might have to give respecting the Memorandum as to the Afghan boundary communicated to me by M. de Staal this morning, proposing certain modifications in the draft Agreement which had been arranged with M. de Staal and M. Lessar. Mr. Currie was present.

In reply to a question from Lord Kimberley, M. Lessar stated that he understood the proposal of the Russian Government respecting Zulfikar to mean that the line, after starting from a point on the Heri-Rud, a little to the north of the western opening of the Zulfikar Pass, should run for a distance of 2 or 3 versts along the heights on the north of the pass, should then turn and follow the heights south of the pass in a south-easterly direction.

M. Lessar had nothing to say as to the proposed change in the definition of the point at which the line would cross the Murghab; but with regard the line east of the Murghab, he said that no doubt some difficulty had been felt in consequence of a portion of the heights along which it had been proposed that the line should be traced not being laid down in the map prepared by the English Commission, of which copies had been supplied to the Russian Government. If these heights did not exist, the definition given in the draft Agreement might lead to confusion, and M. Lessar thought that it was on this ground that the Russian Government had wished to substitute a zone. This zone would extend from the heights to the north and west of the Kaisor and Sangalak to the edge of the cultivated lands irrigated by those rivers.

It would therefore lie to the south of the Russian line instead of to the north of it, as proposed in the first draft of the Agreement.

Lord Kimberley stated that points raised in the Memorandum required careful examination, and that an answer would be sent to M. de Staal.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 32.

Memorandum sent to M. de Staal, May 22, 1885.

HER Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the Memorandum which M. de Staal handed to Lord Granville on the 21st instant relative to the proposed frontier between the Heri-Rud and the Oxus.

It appears from this Memorandum that the Russian Government are not satisfied with the definition of the line agreed upon in London in communication with M. de Staal and M. Lessar, and which the Ambassador undertook to recommend for their acceptance.

The points on which a modification of the line is asked are the following :—

1. As regards Zulfikar, the Memorandum deprives the Afghans of the passage left to them by that agreement, and proposes that the line, after leaving the Heri-Rud a little to the north of the point marked Zulfikar Pass on the English map, should follow in an eastern and southern direction the crests of the heights which border the Valley of the Heri-Rud, and then should pass between Ak-Robat and Souma Karez.

2. That the point north of Maruchak, at which the frontier will cross the Murghab, should be fixed so as to attach as much as possible to the Russian territory the lands cultivated by the Sarik Turkomans and their pastures, instead of the stipulation that it should leave to Afghanistan Maruchak and its dependencies.

3. The Memorandum proposes that the frontier east of the Murghab shall be traced within a zone between the heights indicated on the Russian map, which border on the north and west the Valleys of the Kaisor and the Sangalak, and the limits of the cultivated lands of Maimeneh and Andkhoi, forming part of Afghan territory, and should end at Khoja Saleh ; the delimitation of the pastures belonging to the respective populations to be left to the Commissioners, and, in case of their being unable to agree, to be referred to the Governments.

The Memorandum ends by stating that if the Cabinet of London holds to an extension of the Afghan pastures bordering on Maimeneh and Andkhoi, and to an extension of the limits of Zulfikar, in such a way, however, as to secure Russian territory against the incursions of bands which might take advantage of the pass, the Russian Government would consent on the condition that Maruchak should be ceded to them, and the frontier fixed to the north of Bala Murghab.

To deal, first, with the concluding paragraph of the Memorandum, the Russian Government appear to be under a misapprehension as to the views of Her Majesty's Government in regard to the points to which it refers. They have not asked for any extension of the Afghan pastures, but only that the inhabitants of Maimeneh and Andkhoi, which, under the Agreement of 1873, were recognized as belonging to Afghanistan, should not be deprived of their cultivated lands, or of those pastures, the use of which they were actually enjoying before the Russian occupation of Merv established tranquillity in those regions.

With regard to Zulfikar, they do not claim more for the Afghans than the command of the passage running eastwards from the Heri-Rud.

If the definition in the Project of Agreement could be construed so as to imply more than this, they would be ready to consider a different wording ; but a definition of Zulfikar which would not secure to the Afghans the command of the pass in question would render the arrangement valueless to Afghanistan.

The suggestion that Maruchak should be ceded to Russia and the frontier fixed north of Bala Murghab could not be entertained by Her Majesty's Government. The possession of that place by Afghanistan is considered by them as an essential condition of the settlement, and it is in accordance with the proposal made by the Russian Government on the 16th January.

Her Majesty's Government agree with the Russian Government that great circumspection is necessary in tracing the frontier. They would be prepared to agree to the following modifications in the project drawn up with M. de Staal and M. Lessar :—

1. As regards Zulfikar, " the frontier will start from the Heri-Rud a little to the north of the point marked 'Zulfikar Pass' on the map attached to the Protocol (English map), and will follow the crests of the heights bordering on the north the pass which runs from the Heri-Rud eastwards, so as to leave to Afghanistan the command of both ends of the pass in question."

2. With regard to the point at which the frontier is to cross the Murghab, Her Majesty's Government are ready to agree that it should be defined as a point north of Maruchak, fixed so as to leave to Russia the lands cultivated by the Sariks and their pastures.

The principle thus laid down is accepted by Her Majesty's Government as an equitable one, on the understanding that it should be applied to the populations on both sides of the line. They would accordingly propose for the frontier east of the Murghab the following definition, which would obviate the difficulties caused by the doubts thrown by recent surveys on the position of the heights mentioned in the boundary proposed by Russia on the 16th January, and embodied in the draft Agreement.

"Applying the above principle both to the Turkomans subject to Russia and to the subjects of the Ameer of Afghanistan, the frontier will follow a line north of the Valley of the Kaisor and west of the Valley of the Sangalak (Ab-i-Ankhoi), and leaving Ankhoi to the east will run to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus.

"The delimitation of the pastures belonging to the respective populations will be left to the Commissioners. In the event of their not agreeing, such delimitation will be settled by the two Governments on the basis of the maps drawn up and signed by the Commissioners."

No. 33.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 22, 1885.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a Memorandum* on the subject of the Afghan boundary, which was communicated to me yesterday by the Russian Ambassador, proposing further modifications in the line described in the Memorandum which was forwarded to you in my despatch of the 16th instant.

I have to-day given to M. de Staal a Memorandum in reply, of which a copy is also inclosed,† and in doing so, I stated privately that his Excellency would observe that we had desired as much as possible to meet the wishes of the Russian Government. Her Majesty's Government had not been able to withdraw from some points of vital importance which had been agreed to, not only by the Russian Representatives in London, but in principle by the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh.

I said that Her Majesty's Government were most anxious within such limits to come to a friendly settlement of the question of the boundary, and they believed that His Majesty the Emperor fully reciprocated this desire.

I repeated to his Excellency my conviction that this would best be insured by a speedy Agreement, and by the avoidance of all unnecessary delay.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 34.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 23.)

(Telegraphic.) *May 23, 1885.*

YOUR telegram of the 4th: ‡ Afghan boundary.

I informed Ameer by letter of boundary proposed in the above telegram. I have now received a satisfactory reply from him, in which he says he most willingly accepts the line described.

No. 35.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 23, 1885.*

THE papers sent to you by to-day's messenger contain full information as to the progress of the negotiations in regard to the Afghan frontier.

The Russian Government, as your Excellency will see from the Memorandum

* No. 29. † No. 32. ‡ No. 16.

communicated to me by M. de Staal on the 21st instant,* are not satisfied with the definition of the boundary, which in its original form was agreed to by his Excellency and M. Lessar, and recommended by them to their Government, and which, as you are aware, has since been modified in terms approved by them, in order to meet the views of the Russian Government.

Fresh modifications are now asked for as regards Zulfikar, the point on the Murghab and the line east of that river; and, failing the adoption of these by Her Majesty's Government, it is proposed that Maruchak should be given up to Russia.

Her Majesty's Government are prepared to accept the new Russian definition of the point on the Murghab, and have proposed such changes in the wording of the draft Agreement in regard to the Zulfikar Pass, and the line east of the Murghab, as will make it clear that they only claim for the Afghans the command of the pass running eastwards from the Heri-Rud and the possession by the inhabitants of Maimeneh and Andkoi of their cultivated lands and of the pastures used by them at the time of the occupation of Merv by Russia.

The line laid down by Her Majesty's Government is in fact admitted already to be correct in principle by the Imperial Government. M. de Giers' telegram of the 4th (16th) April agreed to the exchange of Zulfikar for Penjdeh; and to give Zulfikar without the command of the pass would make the possession of it valueless to the Afghans. Maruchak was included in Afghanistan by the line which the Russian Government proposed on the 16th January. Maimeneh and Andkoi were recognized as belonging to Afghanistan by the Agreement of 1873; and Her Majesty's Government cannot suppose that the Russian Government would wish to deprive the populations of those districts of what fairly belongs to them, or to apply to them a rule different from that which M. de Giers has himself laid down in regard to the Sariks.

These three points are considered by Her Majesty's Government as of vital importance, and as essential to a satisfactory arrangement.

Her Majesty's Government feel no doubt that the Emperor of Russia and his Government are sincerely desirous of arriving at an understanding which will remove the grounds of difference between the two countries. You will have no difficulty in giving the assurances that the Queen and Her Majesty's Government are on their side most anxious for an honourable settlement of the question.

Her Majesty's Government have endeavoured to deal with the points in dispute in the most conciliatory spirit, and they believed that the terms which had been settled here with the Russian Ambassador and M. Lessar would be accepted in substance if not in all their details at St. Petersburgh. They still entertain the hope that this expectation will not be disappointed. I have to request your Excellency to take every opportunity of urging upon the Russian Government the views expressed in this despatch and in the communication which I made yesterday to M. de Staal, and of impressing upon them the great importance in the interests of both countries of avoiding further delay in coming to an agreement.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 36.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 24, 10·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Namuzak, May* 21.

I COMMUNICATED to Afghan authorities arrangement notified in your Lordship's telegram of the 11th instant,† but I could not tell them definitely what Penjdeh frontier was to be, as your Lordship referred me to despatch which had been taken away by Sir P. Lumsden. I understand, however, that line runs to point north of Maruchak, which belongs to Afghanistan. A letter has, however, been received by Afghan Commander of Bala Murghab from Russian Colonel commanding Pul-i-Khisti, dated 16th May, announcing temporary neutrality of Penjdeh, and stating that his Master considers Tanur Sangi to be the boundary between Penjdeh and Afghan territory, and that Afghans, if they cross it, will violate neutrality of Penjdeh. The letter adds that the Russian forces will not cross to right bank of Khushk.

The arrangement as thus construed will leave the Russians precisely as they were. They continue to hold Pul-i-Khisti, and their Governor remains in Penjdeh.

* No. 29. † No. 23.

On other hand, Tanur Sangi ford being at Penjdeh end of Bala Murghab valley, Afghans are deprived of Maruchak and Karawal Khana. It is, perhaps, desirable that Afghan troops should not at present advance there, as both these valleys are inhabited by Penjdeh Sariks, and I can arrange this provided right of Afghanistan to these valleys is not prejudged, and provided that Penjdeh neutrality is made real by withdrawal of Russian troops and Governor beyond Penjdeh cultivation, which extends to Kuzban Nyaz, 12 miles to the north of Pul-i-Khisti.

Pending instructions, I have arranged that Afghans do not advance beyond Tanur Sangi.

No. 37.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 25.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 20, 1885.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch of the 11th instant,* I called this afternoon upon M. de Giers, and suggested to his Excellency that the numbers of the escort which should accompany the Afghan Boundary Commission should be fixed by the Commissioners themselves on the spot; and not limited to 100 men at most for each side.

His Excellency replied that His Imperial Majesty had expressed a strong wish that a limit should be agreed upon for the number of the escort, because a large one would be looked upon as a demonstration, and would give rise to agitation among the Turkomans. I replied that the Commissioners must be the best judges of the necessities of the case, and would not be likely to burthen themselves with a greater number than was necessary. But his Excellency insisted that more than 100 men on each side were quite unnecessary.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 38.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(*Received May* 25, 6·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Namuzak, May* 22, 1885.

FOLLOWING is translation of Russian version of letter of 4th (16th) May, from Russian Colonel at Pul-i-Khisti to Afghan Commander, Bala Murghab:—

"In consequence of your movement to Bala Murghab, and the receipt by us to-day of information from our superior authorities to effect that Russian Government, on England's representation, has temporarily conceded to consider Oasis of Pendjeh as neutral zone, the troops of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia and the Afghan detachments meanwhile remaining in their positions, I inform you, Sir, that the frontier adopted towards your side for the Penjdeh Oasis is a straight line from Sheek Oulia to Tanur Sangi, and the violation from your side of this neutral line will by us be considered as an expression of hostile intentions.

"I shall, on the other hand, not depass the line of the Khuskh River, and the prolongation of this line on right bank of Murghab."

No. 39.

Earl Granville to Colonel Ridgeway.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 26, 1885.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 21st instant† on the subject of the arrangement come to with the Russian Government for the neutralization of Penjdeh pending the work of delimitation, I have to inform you that according to that agreement the limit of Penjdeh is a point north of Maruchak, the exact position of which is not specified.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

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* No. 24. † No. 36.

No. 40.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 26, 1885.

IN his telegram of the 21st instant, which has been repeated to your Excellency, Colonel Ridgeway states that the Afghan Commander at Bala Murghab has received a letter from the Russian Colonel commanding at Pul-i-Khisti, to the effect that the Russian Government consider Tanur Sangi to be the boundary between Penjdeh and Afghan territory, and that if the Afghans cross it they will violate the neutrality of Penjdeh. The letter added that the Russians would not cross to the right bank of the Kushk. I have to request your Excellency to point out to M. de Giers that the arrangement made by the Russian officers is inconsistent with the terms of the agreement stated in my telegram of the 1st instant,* that the limits of Penjdeh would be understood to extend only to the point north of Maruchak, at which the Russian Government proposed the boundary should pass through the valley. This definition was accepted in M. de Staal's note of the 8th instant.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 41.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, May 28.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May* 28, 1885.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 21st instant, I inquired of M. de Giers what he considered was the precise date on which the neutralization of Penjdeh came into force.

His Excellency could not give me an immediate answer, but promised to consult the Minister of War upon the subject.

At an interview which I had with him last night, he informed me that the Russian Government looked upon the 16th instant, new style, as the day on which the neutralization of Penjdeh came into force.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 42.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, May 29.)

(Télégraphique.) *St. Pétersbourg, le* 16 (28) *Mai,* 1885.

ÉTANT désireux de contribuer à prompte solution et éviter malentendus, au sujet de Zulfagar, nous sommes disposés à abandonner aux Afghans le défilé qui, partant du Héri-Rud, traverse la première rangée de hauteurs, de façon toutefois à ne pas couper et empêcher les communications entre les points situés du même côté de la frontière. La ligne tracée par Lessar sur la Carte Anglaise depuis le Héri-Rud par les points A et B répond à cette proposition. Une ligne tracée par le point C couperait nos communications. Quant à la frontière depuis le point A jusqu'à Yegri-Gueuk, vous êtes autorisé à proposer le tracé qui suivrait autant que possible les crêtes des collines en laissant aux Afghans Pistalik-Attek. Pour tout le reste nous acceptons la dernière rédaction des propositions Anglaises.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, May* 16 (28), 1885.

BEING desirous of contributing to a prompt solution and avoiding misunderstanding with regard to Zulfikar, we are ready to abandon to the Afghans the defile which, starting from the Heri-Rud, crosses the first range of heights, in such a way, however, as not to cut and interrupt the communications between the points situated on the same side of the frontier. The line drawn by Lessar on the English Map from the Heri-Rud through the points A and B answers to this proposal. A line drawn through the point C would cut our communications. As to the frontier from the

* See "Central Asia No. 5 (1885)," p. 39.

point A to the Egri-Gueuk, you are authorized to propose the line which would follow as far as possible the crests of the hills, leaving Pistalik-Attek to the Afghans. For the whole of the remainder we accept the last draft of the English proposals.

No. 43.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, May 29.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 29, 1885.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that during an interview which I had this morning with M. de Giers his Excellency told me that he had last night sent a telegram to M. de Staal, in which only one objection respecting Zulfikar Pass was made to the proposal transmitted by your Lordship to M. de Staal on the 22nd instant.

This objection he explained by the necessity of retaining the control of the road to Ak-Robat.

His Excellency begged me to express to your Lordship his earnest hope that Her Majesty's Government will agree to this amendment.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 44.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29, 1·40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *May 29, 1885, 5·40 A.M.*

WITH reference to my telegram of the 21st instant, the Sariks of the two districts Maruchak and Karawall Khana, which contain cultivable land to the extent of about 30 square miles, do not exceed 1,500 souls in number, and would be glad to migrate to Sari-Yazi or other unoccupied land north of Penjdeh.

No. 45.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(Received May 30, 11 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *May 27, 1885.*

YOUR Lordship's telegram of the 19th received yesterday.

I think 100 fighting men, excluding followers, sufficient escort for demarcation.

No. 46.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 30, 1885.*

THE Earl of Kimberley met M. Lessar to-day, in order to discuss the proposal of the Russian Government as to the Zulfikar Pass contained in M. de Giers' telegram of the 16th (28th) instant, which was communicated to me yesterday by the Russian Ambassador.

M. Lessar explained that this proposal, which is marked in red on the accompanying Map, was in fact identical with that already made as defined by him at an interview on the 21st instant, referred to in my despatch to your Excellency of that date.

He said that if the line were prolonged from the point (C), it would cut off the communication from Mulla Hairan Taka through (B) and so to (A), leading to the country below. The consequences would be that the Turkoman herdsmen, being unable to drive their flocks by the accustomed routes, would quarrel with the Afghans, and border troubles would be inevitable. He added that he could not see for what purpose it was necessary that there should be an Afghan post at (C), projected, as it were, into Russian territory.

When Lord Kimberley pressed M. Lessar on the strategical question, he said that it could not be of any importance that the Afghans should hold the point, because the main route south was by Ak-Robat and the Khumbao or Rabat-i-Surk Passes, until reaching which there was no obstacle of any kind. The possession of point (B) shut the road by the Heri-Rud. From the point (A) the line would, he said, be drawn so

Extract from Map
by the British Boundary Commission
AS MARKED BY M. LESSAR
to illustrate
Despatch to Sir E. Thornton
of May 30. 1885.
61°
61°30'
35°30'
Pul-i-Khátún
Kinikli
Ádam Ulan (wells)
Old wells
Dahana Rekha Gurg
Khwája Sahámuddin
Zorábád
Old Zorábád
Kushatut
Mulla Hairán Taka
Kangruáli
Chakmakli
Zumkár Pass
Ab-i-Gular
Koh Benitak
Koh-i-Yavaila
Dahana Zakir
Ák Robát (ruins)
Salt lake
Sumbha Karez
Pistalik Attak
Kuai Bulák
Afghan Outpost
Dauli
Kamar Dauli
Koh-i-Maiz
Dasht-i-Takht-i-Khurd
Koh Tartaran Kalak
Takht-i-Sherak
Chah Yalki
Old Kárez
Guirán
Akhtachi
Kishlák Ján
Old Guirán
Khumbao
Pass
Hauz
Burj Guliakuli
Ruined Forts
Jám R.
Koh-i-Kaldak
Takutain
Kádirábád
Hasanábád
TURBAT-I-SHEKHJÁM
K. Dahana Sákhu
K. Surkhi
Hauz-i-Gurgao
K. Nakdali
Kilich Khan
Dahana Taimanah
Gorband
Narband
K. Tokaz
Shorao R.
K. Safed
Ujarlik
Yar-ailan
Taka Namaksar
Namaksar
A
B
C

as to leave to Afghanistan the road passing south-east of Karez Elias and north of Pistalik Attek and Sumbar Karez.

Lord Kimberley replied that he reserved the consideration of the points raised.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 47.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 28, 1885.*

WITH reference to the instruction contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 26th instant, I found it rather difficult to decide from Colonel Ridgeway's telegram of the 21st instant, what were the precise points with regard to which it would appear that the arrangement made by the Russian officers for the neutralization of Penjdeh was inconsistent with the Agreement accepted by M. de Staal's note of the 8th instant.

Neither M. de Giers nor I can discover in any map that we have the names of Sheikh Oubia and Tanur Sangi, which are spoken of in Colonel Ridgeway's telegram as the two places a line between which the Russian Colonel at Pul-i-Khisti stated was to separate Penjdeh from Afghan territory respecting the neutralization of Penjdeh.

I do not, therefore, understand whether Colonel Ridgeway objects to this line, nor whether that is the line north of Maruchak along which it was proposed by the Russian Government that the boundary should pass through the valley, and which it was agreed should be considered as the limits of Penjdeh for its neutralization.

With regard, however, to the Governor of Penjdeh, I spoke to M. de Giers last night, suggesting his withdrawal; but his Excellency assures me that he is not a Russian; that he was not appointed by the Russian military authorities, but by the Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh, and that he has no Russian troops under his orders or control, and, indeed, that there is not one Russian soldier in Penjdeh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 48.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 2.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, May 29, 1885.*

I CALLED upon M. de Giers at his office on the night of the 27th instant, when his Excellency informed me that he had just forwarded to the Emperor at Peterhof a translation of the Memorandum respecting the Afghan boundary which your Lordship sent to M. de Staal on the 22nd instant. He had urged that, if possible, this last proposal of Her Majesty's Government should be accepted, and that he should be empowered to send an answer without delay. His Excellency hoped and expected that he would receive an answer from the Peterhof Palace yesterday, and would be able to transmit the result at once to London.

I again called upon his Excellency this morning. He informed me that it had been found necessary to make only one objection or observation with regard to the above-mentioned proposal. This was with respect to the Zulfikar Pass. His Excellency explained that south of the starting-point on the Heri-Rud the pass had an eastward direction for from 6 to 7 versts, and that the Russian Government would not object to the boundary-line running along the crests of the hills north of this pass, the possession of which would give access to the Afghan territory south of it; but that there was another pass from 10 to 12 versts further east, the control of which would involve that of the road to Ak Robat, which the Russian Government could not consent to give up. His Excellency hardly thought that your Lordship's Memorandum of the 22nd instant even intended that this latter pass should be within Afghan territory; but in any case the Russian Government felt it impossible to abandon it, and his Excellency expressed his earnest hope that Her Majesty's Government would acquiesce in this view.

M. Zinovieff was present at our interview, and M. de Giers said to him in an inquiring tone that an agreement between the two Governments might be necessary; that those of the inhabitants who preferred it should have full liberty to migrate from

one side of the line and establish themselves on the other. M. Zinovieff answered in a more positive tone that it would certainly be necessary. I strongly urged that as the boundary-line would not be finally determined until after the Commissioners had laid it down, and their decisions had been approved of by the two Governments, it would be most inexpedient to complicate the present question with any new proposals, and that such matters should be left for the Convention which it had been suggested should be signed after the Commissioners should have completed their labours. But M. de Giers and M. Zinovieff still more strongly insisted that as the chief points of the boundary would now be decided upon, it would be advisable that an agreement with regard to the optional migration of the inhabitants from one side to the other should be arrived at without delay.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 49.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(Received June 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *May* 29, 1885.

I HAVE received reliable news from Bala Murghab, dated 25th, to the effect that Russians have withdrawn from Tanur Sangi, but that Afghans will not patrol beyond that place pending instructions. Russians are reported to have recalled their Governor from Penjdeh and have left Pul-i-Khisti; but this requires to be confirmed.

No. 50.

Colonel Ridgeway to Earl Granville.—(Received June 3, 6·30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Sinjao, May* 31, 1885.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 26th instant, I infer that Afghans may advance to Maruchak, despite local declaration by Russians that their doing so will be considered as a hostile proceeding. I shall, however, defer action till I have received definite instructions.

No. 51.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 4, 1885.

IN your despatch of the 28th ultimo you inquire as to the precise point with regard to which it would appear that the arrangement made by the Russian officers for the neutralization of Penjdeh was inconsistent with the Agreement accepted by M. de Staal's note of the 18th instant.

I have to explain that the neutralization of Penjdeh, as interpreted in the letter of the Russian Colonel, would, contrary to the arrangement made with the Russian Government, have excluded the Afghans from Maruchak.

In view, however, of Colonel Ridgeway's telegram of the 29th May, reporting the withdrawal of the Russians from Tinur Sangi, it is possible that this matter may have been set right, and I have to request your Excellency to ascertain whether this is the case.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 52.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 4, 1885.

IN his telegram of the 31st ultimo, Colonel Ridgeway infers that the Afghans may advance to Maruchak notwithstanding the declaration on the part of the Russian authorities that there doing so would be a hostile proceeding.

I have to request your Excellency to inform the Russian Government that the Agreement for the neutralization of Penjdeh is understood by Her Majesty's Government as giving the Afghans the right of occupying Maruchak, and that Her Majesty's Government propose to sanction their doing so.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 53.

Memorandum communicated to M. de Staal, June 4, 1885.

IN making the proposal of the 22nd ultimo, the object of Her Majesty's Government was to secure the full possession of the Zulfikar Pass to Afghanistan.

Her Majesty's Government do not desire to cut any existing communications between points on the Russian side of the frontier. There is a difference of opinion as to what these are, but Her Majesty's Government would not object to its being an instruction to the Commission to preserve as much as possible such communications without interfering with the command of the pass by the Afghans.

No. 54.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June 4, 1885.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith, for your information, a copy of a Memorandum which I have given to the Russian Ambassador on the subject of the Afghan boundary, in reply to the telegram from M. de Giers of the 28th ultimo.*

In making this communication to M. de Staal, I stated that I hoped the question would now be settled.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 55.

M. de Giers to M. de Staal.—(Communicated to Earl Granville by M. de Staal, June 6.)

(Télégraphique.) *St. Pétersbourg, le 24 Mai (5 Juin), 1885.*

CROYANT devoir insister sur intégrité de nos communications, serions d'avis que c'est à la Commission qu'il faudrait abandonner le soin de concilier ce principe avec les conditions auxquelles le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique voudrait subordonner la cession à l'Afghanistan de Zulfagar.

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, May 24 (June 5), 1885.*

THINKING it our duty to insist upon the integrity of our communications, we are of opinion that the task of conciliating this principle with the conditions to which Her Britannic Majesty's Government would wish to subordinate the cession of Zulfikar to Afghanistan must be left to the Commission.

No. 56.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June 6, 1885.*

IN your Excellency's despatch of the 29th ultimo you stated that M. de Giers objected to the proposal with reference to the Zulfikar Pass made by me to M. de Staal on the 22nd instant, on the ground that it was necessary for Russia to retain the control of the road to Ak-Robat.

I understood from M. de Lessar that the Russian objection was founded on the apprehension that their communications from Mulla Hairan Taka southwards might be interrupted.

* No. 53.

I have to request your Excellency to point out to M. de Giers that the line proposed by Her Majesty's Government would in no way interfere with the road from Kangrueli to Ak-Robat, as this passes at some distance from the point at the mouth of the Zulfikar Pass referred to as point C in M. de Giers' telegram of the 16th (28th) May.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 57.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June 7, 1885.*

THE Russian Ambassador communicated to me yesterday morning the inclosed telegram from M. de Giers, containing the views of the Russian Government as to the manner in which the question of the Zulfikar Pass should be dealt with.*

His Excellency asked me in the evening when I should be able to give him an answer. He hoped the matter might be considered as settled.

I said that I would reply on the 18th, but that I regretted that the communication which he had made me left the whole matter open.

M. de Staal said that he considered the Russian answer as an acceptance of our proposal of the 4th instant. I replied that in that case it would be only a question of drafting. His Excellency wished me, however, to understand that he had no instructions excepting the communication which he had made to me.

I expressed to his Excellency to-day the great satisfaction with which I had gathered from our conversation that, according to his personal opinion, the answer of the Russian Government was an acceptance of our last communication with regard to the Afghan frontier. I said that Her Majesty's Government wished to avoid any possible misunderstanding on the subject, and would therefore be glad to be informed, in the name of the Russian Government, that while the Commissioners should be instructed to preserve as much as possible any existing communication between points on the Russian side of the frontier, the basis of the proceedings of the Commissioners would be to leave to the Afghans the command of the Zulfikar Pass.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 58.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, June 9.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June 8, 1885.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegrams of the 4th instant, I have the honour to state that I have this evening received a Memorandum from M. de Giers which recognizes the correctness of the interpretation given by Her Majesty's Government to the arrangement for the neutralization of Penjdeh, but suggests that Her Majesty's Government should advise the Afghans to abstain from all military movements which might risk a collision with the Sarik Turkomans.

A copy of the above-mentioned Memorandum will be forwarded to your Lordship by to-morrow's post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON

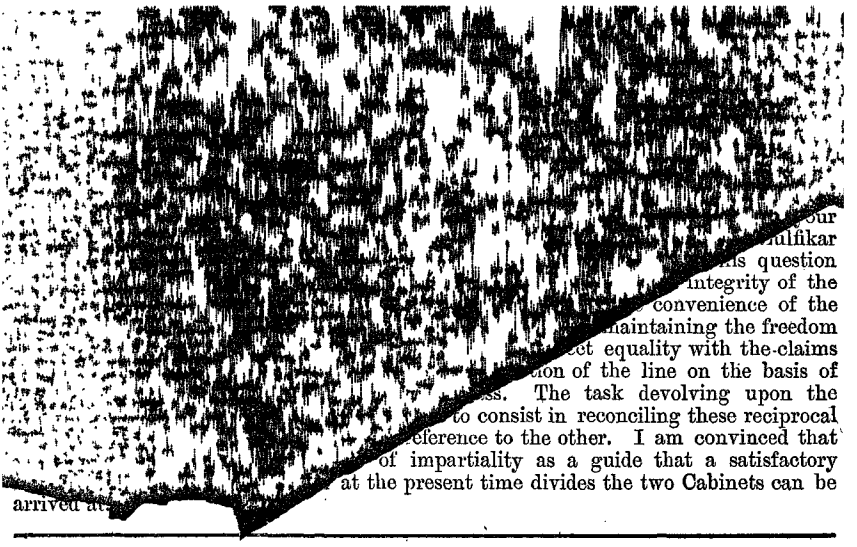
No. 59.

M. de Staal to Earl Granville.—(Received June 11.)

(Extrait.) *Londres, le 10 Juin, 1885.*

QUANT à la question de délimitation Afghane, les instructions télégraphiques reçues de M. de Giers me mettent en mesure de vous communiquer que le Cabinet Impérial ne se trouve pas à même de se rallier aux termes dans lesquels votre Excellence a formulé la solution à donner au différend de Zulficar. Le Gouvernement Impérial accepte la proposition de différer cette question à l'examen de la Commission. Mais il ne saurait admettre que l'intégrité des communications Russes dans ces parages fût subordonnée aux convenances des Afghans. Les exigences que nous impose le

* No. 55.



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…at the present time divides the two Cabinets can be
arrived at.

No. 60.

Earl Granville to M. de Staal.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, June* 11, 1885.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's communication of yesterday.

I will not fail to give the information contained in it to my successor as soon as his appointment is made.

In the meantime, the Russian Government will have clearly understood that the limit of our demand is to secure Zulfikar to the Afghans in exchange for Penjdeh, which arrangement you were authorized by the Emperor to agree to on the 16th April.

This authority was given in answer to the statement made by Lord Kimberley at our interview on the 14th April, which your Excellency will remember, that it was a *sine qud non* that the Zulfikar Pass should be left in possession of Afghanistan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 61.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 12.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, June* 9, 1885.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegrams of the 4th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I called upon M. de Giers on the following morning, and explained to him that the line laid down by the Russian Colonel in command at Pul-i-Khisti for the neutralization at Penjdeh was not in accordance with the arrangement agreed upon by Her Majesty's Government with M. de Staal, inasmuch as it excluded the Afghans from occupying Maruchak, which they had a right to do. I added that Her Majesty's Government, recognizing this right, proposed to sanction their availing themselves of it.

M. de Giers replied that he did not doubt the right of the Afghans to occupy Maruchak, but he did not himself know where the two places mentioned, viz., Tanur Sangi and Sheikh Oulia, a line between which was to be the limit of the neutralized Penjdeh, were situated, and that he must refer the question to the Minister of War.

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Mem

THE following is the translation of a letter
command at Pul-i-Khisti, on the 4th (16th) May, to
Murghab :—

"In consequence of your movements to Bala Murgh and the (pt by us to-day of information from our superior authorities, to the effect that the Russian Government on England's representation has temporarily consented to consider the Oasis of Penjdeh as a neutral zone, the troops of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia and the Afghan detachments meanwhile remaining in their positions, I inform you, Sir, that the frontier adopted towards your side for the Penjdeh Oasis is a straight line from Sheikh Oulia to Tanur Sangi, and the violation from your side of this neutral line will by us be considered as an expression of hostile intentions. I shall on the other hand not depass the line of the Khushk River and the prolongation of this line on the right bank of the Murghab."

The limits thus laid down by the officer in command at Pul-i-Khisti would exclude the Afghans from Maruchak contrary to the arrangement made with the Russian Government, that the limits of Penjdeh would be understood to extend only to the point north of Maruchak, at which that Government proposed that the boundary should pass through the valley.

Later information has, however, been received that the Russian troops have withdrawn from Tanur Sangi, and Her Majesty's Government understand that, according to the Neutralization Agreement, the Afghans have the right of occupping Maruchak, and they therefore propose to sanction their availing themselves of that right.

St. Petersburgh, May 24 (*June* 5), 1885.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 61.

Memorandum.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères a pris connaissance du Mémorandum que son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique a bien voulu lui faire parvenir à la date du 24 Mai (5 Juin), et qui a trait à une communication adressée par le Colonel Kazantzew, au Commandant des troupes Afghanes à Bala Mourgab au sujet de la neutralisation du Pendjdé.

Suivant l'avis de l'officier Russe en question la limite sud du territoire neutralisé et que les Afghans seraient tenus de ne point franchir est formée par une ligne droite tracée depuis Sheïkh-Oulia jusqu'à Tanouri-Sangui.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ne croit pas pouvoir admettre cette interprétation de l'arrangement intervenu entre les deux Gouvernemenst au sujet de la neutralisation du Pendjdé. La limite de ce territoire ne s'étendant que jusqu'à un point sis au nord de Méroutchak sur la ligne-frontière proposée par le Cabinet de

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